Life on the Farm and in the Village
South Paris, Maine
1910–1925

by

Merton S. Parsons (1907–1982)
Mary Clifford Colley (1898–2000)
John T. Parsons (1867–1934)

edited by
Jeffrey R. Parsons

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Sept. 6, 2009

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Editor's Preface

This work consists of four sections: (1) "Life on the Farm," by my father, Merton S. Parsons; (2) "Housekeeping at the Clifford Home, South Paris Village," by Dad's cousin, Mary Clifford Colley; (3) "Diaries 1918, 1919, 1922, and 1923," by Merton S. Parsons; and (4) "Diary 1916," by Dad's uncle, John T. Parsons. I have brought these writings together primarily so that Dad's children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends—those now living, and those who will come along in the future—will have some knowledge about life on the Robinson-Parsons Farm in South Paris, Maine, during the first quarter of the 20th century. I also hope that this compilation may be something of a source book for future investigators with interests in farm life in northern New England during this transitional period when traditional family farming all over the U.S. was undergoing rapid change. These essays and diaries reflect something of the old and something of the new—the last gasp of a vanishing way of life and the early stages of a new rural America.

Merton Parsons and Mary Clifford were young people in the early decades of the 20th century; John Parsons was a middle-aged man. Merton's and Mary's essays were written many years after the events to which they refer; Merton's and John's diaries come directly from the era itself. Taken together, these documents offer a good view of rural and small town life in northern New England during a period that is now fading from living memory.

The first section comprises essays that my father wrote about his childhood experiences at the family farm in South Paris, Oxford County, in western Maine. He wrote them intermittently over the years between 1950 and 1981, mostly at his desk in the dining room of our home in Fairfax, Va. He worked there a lot during the evenings, making daily entries into his account books or doing other kinds of paperwork connected with family or community projects. I think part of his inspiration for these essays about his early years came from his own memories of stories about similar topics in *The Youth's Companion* by C. A. Stephens, another Maine farmboy of an earlier generation, that Dad had enjoyed reading so much himself as a youngster.

During the 1940s and early 1950s, Dad used to tell us kids stories about his childhood at the farm. Some of these were about his eccentric Uncle John; others dealt with Sunday rides in the Model T Ford and a variety of other childhood pastimes. Elements of these and other stories appear in the written essays. It may have been his telling of

these stories that first inspired Dad to set them down on paper after the fashion of C. A. Stephens. I think he was also conscious of the fact that his early years at the farm overlapped with the very end of a long era of traditional family farming in northern New England, and perhaps he wanted to give his own children some enduring record of a now-vanished way of life that he had known so well.

I first became aware of Dad's essays about 1960, and I read some of them at that time and over the next few years. By the late 1960s, I had become more interested in early 20th century farm life, and from then on I encouraged Dad to continue the writing, and even suggested to him some topics that I was particularly curious about. He continued to write intermittently about farm life, and to answer many specific inquiries that I put to him, up until about a year before his death in March 1982. Right up to the end he retained a sharp and detailed memory of experiences, techniques, personalities, and sensations of those early years—memories that came from active participation in the hard task of helping his family earn a living on a working Maine farm during the second and third decades of the 20th century. Indeed, part of the very last conversation I had with Dad, just three weeks before he died, was about the old ice house.

In the late 1970s I typed out all the essays I then had, and gave them to Dad to check over. He made a few minor modifications at that time, and I have incorporated these into this collection. I have added footnotes throughout the text in order to insert relevant information that may be of interest to some readers. I have made a few minor changes in Dad's spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and word order, but most is presented here as he wrote it. With a few exceptions the essays are arranged in the order in which they were written, and I have included the date of each piece below its title. Because the essays were written over such a long period of time, inevitably some of them overlap with others in content. I have eliminated a few of the most obvious cases of repetition, but the great majority of the originals have been left unmodified.

Seven of Dad's essays have previously appeared in *Bittersweet Magazine*, a literary periodical published in Norway, Maine, between 1977 and 1985. Six of the essays were part of a multi-authored series, "Recollections of Life down on the Farm," that opened in 1981 with Dad's Fourth of July story:

"When the Circus Came to Town" – April 1981, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 15
"The Fourth of July" – July 1981, Vol. 4, No. 7, p. 11
"Haying" – August 1982, Vol. 5, No. 8, pp. a, 16
"Breaking the Road" – December 1982, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 17
"Winter Sports" – December 1982, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 17, 21
"The Big War" – March 1984, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 15-16
"Winter Woods Work" – January 1985, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 20-22.

The second section of this work consists of three essays by Mary Clifford Colley (Dad's first cousin) about early 20th century housekeeping at her family's home in South Paris village, about three miles from the farm. Mary wrote these at my request in the late 1970s. Although her descriptions reflect town life, not farm life, they are nonetheless nice complements to Dad's writings because they refer to women's domestic work, a topic about which Dad had only a general knowledge.[1]

The third section comprises diaries that Dad kept during 1918, 1919, 1922, and 1923. These provide day-to-day comments on farm life as Dad lived it during the period to which his later essays refer back across a distance of 30-60 years. Interestingly, some of the events mentioned in his essays are also noted in the diaries.

The fourth section is John T. Parsons' 1916 diary. JTP, of course, was the legendary "Uncle John," and in 1916 he lived and worked full time on the farm as hired-man, as he continued to do for the next several years. Uncle John did not write at length, nor did he reflect much on life in general, but his diary provides a good sense of the seasonal round of farm work over a full annual cycle, and offers a nice complement to Dad's boy's-eye view from just a few years later.

In looking back over the essays and diaries, I am struck by what a good place the farm was to grow up on—despite all the hard physical work, low cash income, numerous uncertainties inherent in farm production, rather primitive health care, and, above all, the great tragedy of Oscar's early and unexpected death. By age 10, or even younger, Dad and his siblings were fully engaged in essential farm tasks to the extent that their physical abilities and time off for school permitted. By age 12, Dad was an accomplished horse-driver, hay raker, milker, trapper, sugar maple tapper, gardener, and ice harvester; by 13 or 14

he was assisting in the rugged work of winter timber cutting, and I suspect that by that time he was also beginning to get the hang of farm management. Dad's essays indicate that he regarded many of these tasks as interesting and fun, and clearly they often provided him with a great sense of responsibility, accomplishment, and pride in work well done; even the many less enjoyable and more onerous tasks were clearly recognized as necessary and important for the success of the family farming enterprise.

The essays also tell of the numerous forms of recreation that the surrounding fields and woodlands provided for an active, healthy boy—fishing, trapping, hunting, skating, sliding, or simply walking around and observing nature through the changing northern seasons. Dad's hard-working parents, who both died relatively young, also emerge as sympathetic and caring people who did their best for their children, relatives, friends, and community.

I think those of us who knew Dad during his lifetime can detect in these writings the foundations for many of the traits that characterized his adult personality: his honesty, optimism, strong sense of responsibility, belief in the importance of community public life, affection for family and friends, skills in sawing and splitting wood and in gardening, and his lifelong predilection for walks in the woods.

In these essays Dad does not dwell much on the negative aspects of his early life on the farm. Nevertheless, the reader can sense something of the strains and tensions that must have existed. Undoubtedly there was some degree of tension between Oscar, the younger brother and now the farm manager, and John, the misfit older brother, now reduced to the subordinate role of hired man. Also stressful must have been the relationships between Luella, Oscar's wife newly arrived late in 1906, and Oscar's mother and four sisters, women who had lived on the farm for decades before Luella's arrival, and who continued to be present either as permanent occupants or as long-term visitors. Finally—and these Dad does speak of in some detail—there were the implacable deadlines for planting and harvesting imposed by Nature's harsh and unyielding seasonal forces in this region along the northern fringes of productive agriculture. By the time they were 6 or 8 years old, even the kids knew that the potential consequences of not meeting these deadlines could have been financially disastrous.

The eloquent comments of cultural geographer Carl O. Sauer, writing in 1962[2] about changes in traditional family farming in the Midwest (which he refers to as the Middle Border), seem very applicable to Dad's New England experience:

> The outbreak of the war in 1914 brought rapidly rising demand and prices for supplies to the Allies and to American industry. Our intervention in 1917 urged the farmer to still more production: "Food Will Win the War" that was to end all wars. He made more money than ever before, he had less help, he was encouraged to buy more equipment and more land. The end of the war saw a strongly industrialized country that continued to draw labor from the rural sections. Improved roads, cars, tractors, and trucks made the horse unnecessary, and thereby the old crop rotation broke down. Farming became less a way of life and more a highly competitive business for which the agricultural colleges trained specialists as engineers, chemists, and economists, to aid fewer and fewer farmers to produce more market goods, to widen their incomes against the rising cost of labor, taxes, and capital needs. This became known as "freeing people from the land," . . .
>
> The Middle Border now belongs to a lost past, a past in which different ways and ends of life went side by side. We have since defined the common welfare in terms of a society organized for directed material progress. For the present, at the least, we control the means to produce goods at will. We have not learned how to find equivalent satisfactions in jobs well done by simple means and by independent judgment that gave competence and dignity to rural work. The family farm apprenticed youth well for life there or elsewhere, and it enriched the quality of American life. It will be missed.

Acknowledgments

Over the years I have had assistance and encouragement in working up these materials from Dad himself, my mother (Elisabeth O. Parsons), Dad's sister (Bernice Parsons Paul), Dad's two brothers (Philip S. Parsons and Shirley R. Parsons), Dad's cousin (Mary Clifford Colley), Ben Conant (local historian in South Paris), and especially from my wife (Mary H. Parsons). I thank them all.

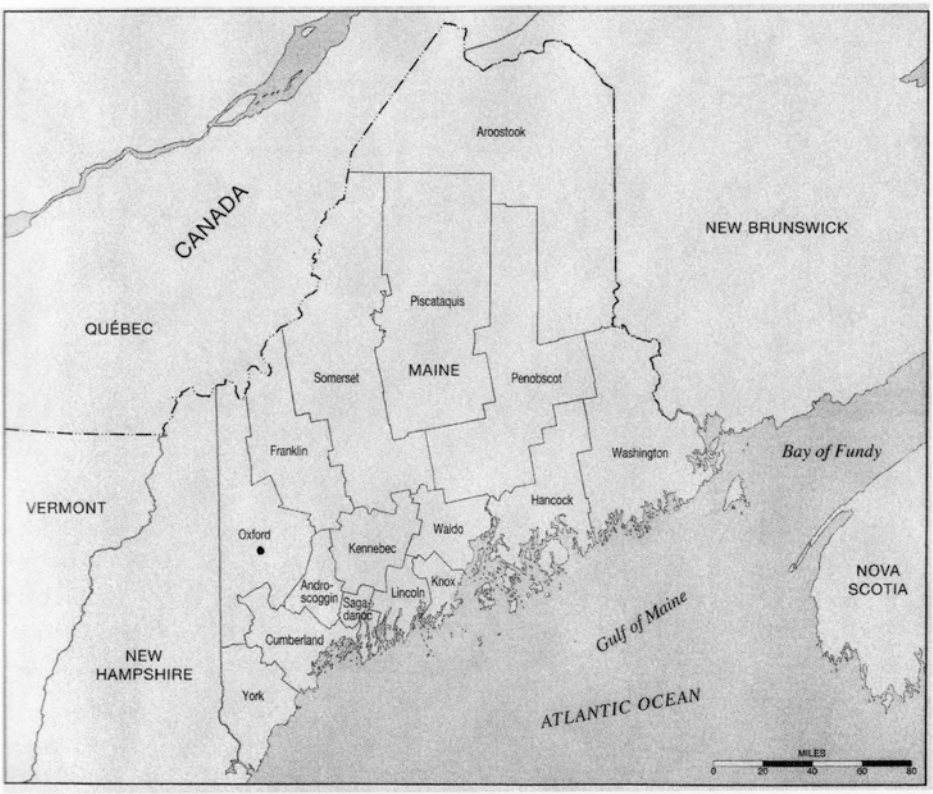


Figure 2. Maine, showing counties. The approximate location of South Paris is shown as a solid dot in Oxford County.

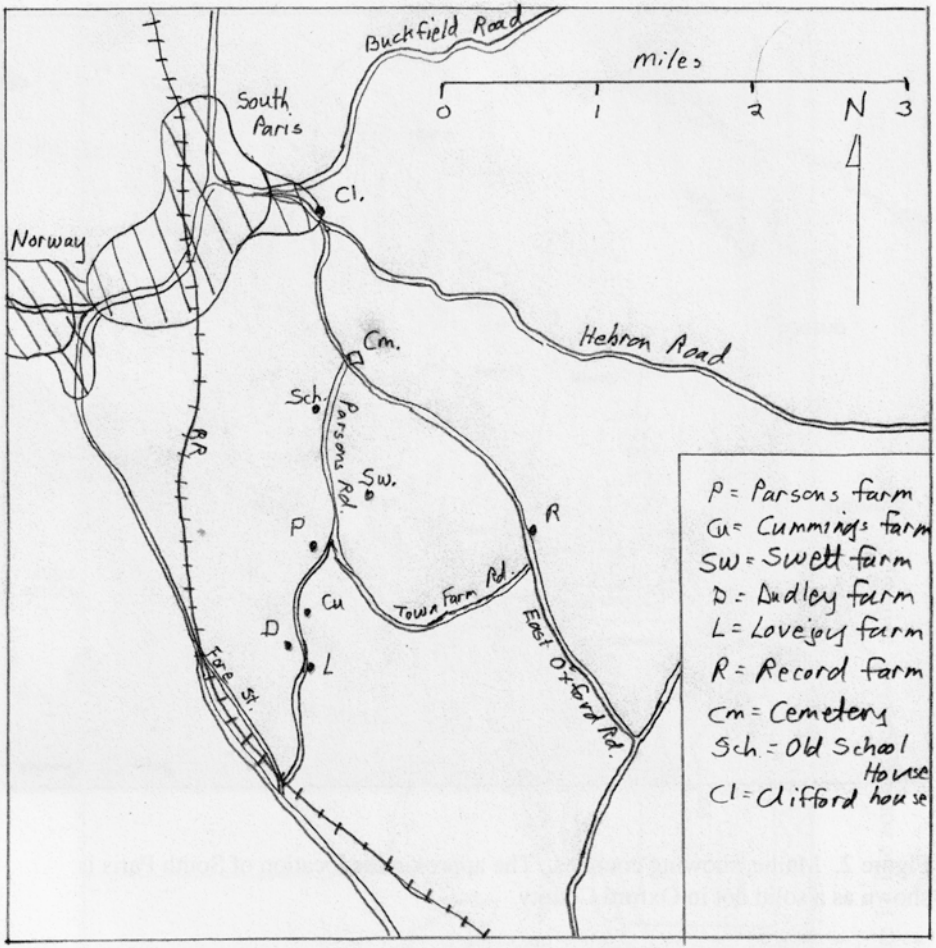


Figure 3. The farm neighborhood, South Paris and environs.

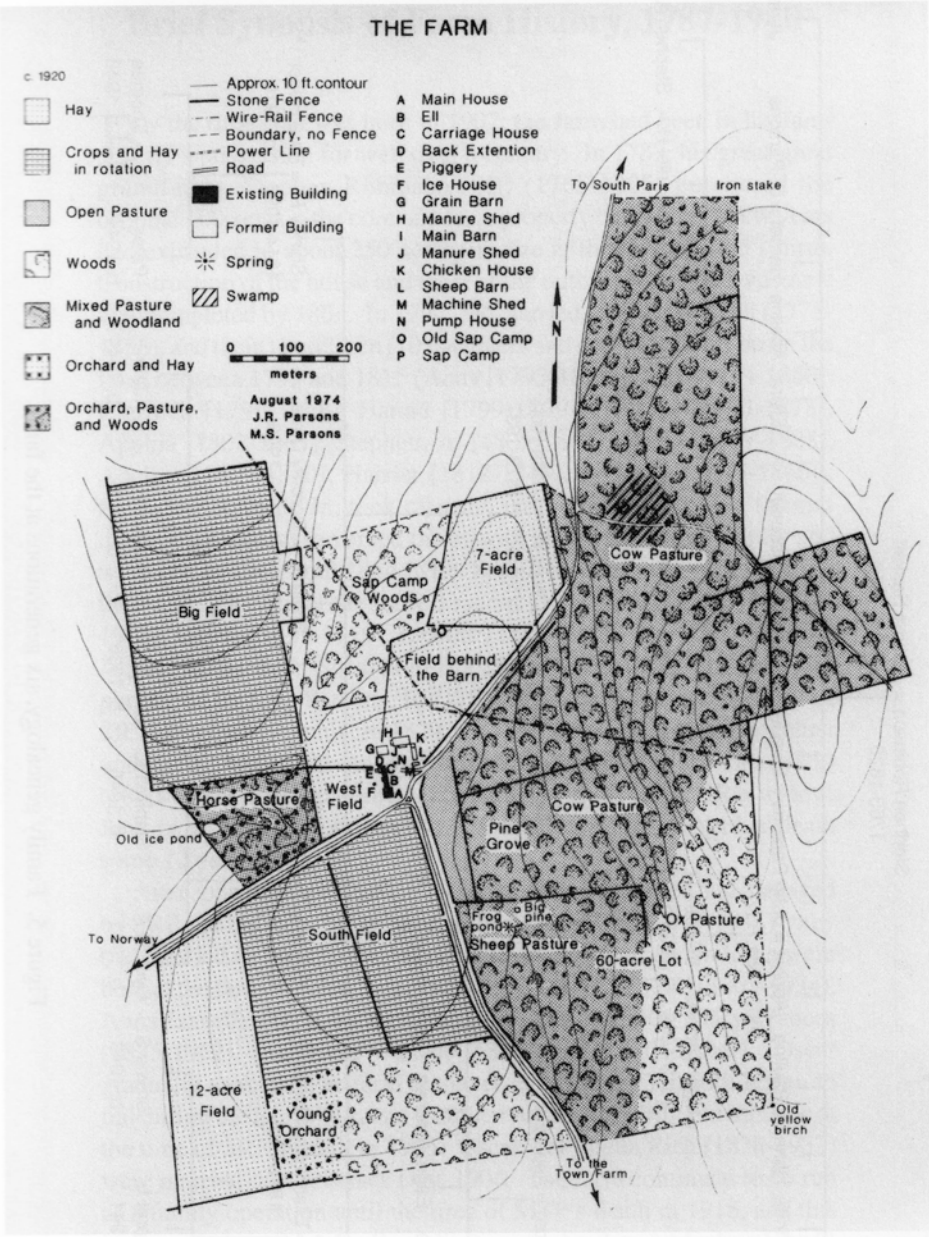


Figure 4. Map of the farm in 1920.

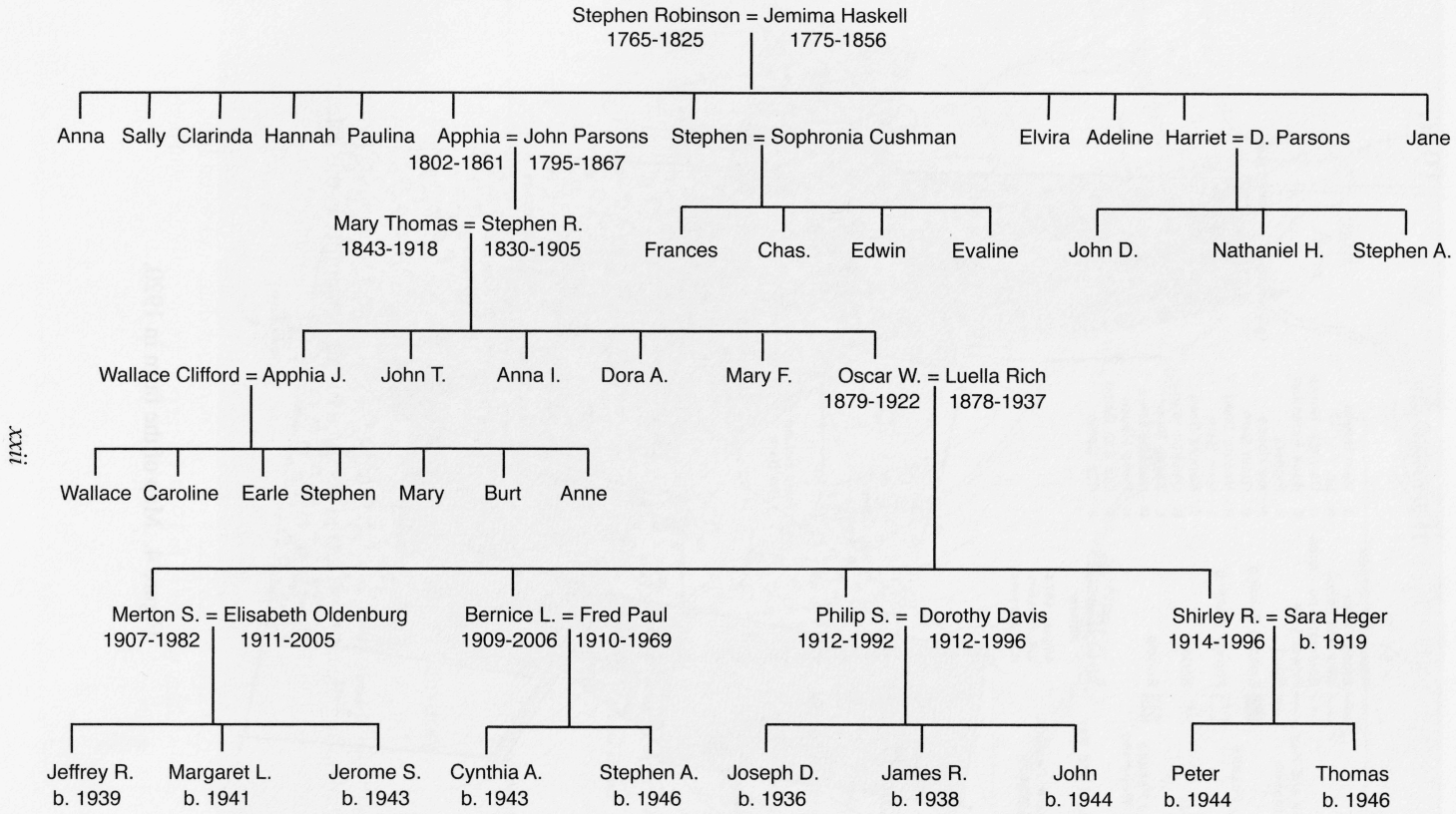


Figure 5. Family genealogy, six generations at the farm.

Brief Synopsis of Farm History, 1787-1940

By the time Dad was born in 1907, the farm had been in his family's possession for well over a century. In 1787, his great-great grandfather, Stephen Robinson (SR) (1765-1825) purchased the original 100 acres—the core of a farm property that within a few years had expanded to about 250 acres, its size at the time of Dad's birth. Construction of the house and most of the outbuildings that Dad knew was completed by 1803. In 1792, SR married Jemima Haskell (1775-1856), and their 11 children (10 daughters and one son) were born at the farm between 1793 and 1815 (Anna [1793-1870], Sally [1794-1860], Clarinda [1796-1828], Hanna [1799-1809], Paulina [1800-1878], Apphia [1802-1861], Stephen, Jr. [1805-1867], Elvira [1807-1888], Adeline [1809-1880], Harriet [1812-1849], and Jane [1815-1866]). Stephen Robinson, Jr., took over the farm at the time of his father's death in 1825, and remained there, with his own growing family and widowed mother, until 1844 (wife: Sophronia Cushman [1804-1867]; their children born at the farm: Frances [1831-1893], Charles [1836-1905], Edwin [1839-1919], Evaline [1842-1912]). In 1844, Stephen, Jr., left for greener pastures in Rockford, Illinois, and the farm was purchased by John Parsons, Jr. (1795-1868), who had married one of SR's daughters, Apphia, in 1829. In 1844, John and Apphia, together with their 14-year-old son (and only child), Stephen R. Parsons (SRP) (1830-1905), took up permanent residence at the farm; SR's widow, Jemima Robinson, continued to live there with them until her death some 12 years later.

After John Parsons' death in 1868, the farm was owned and managed by SRP and his wife, Mary Thomas Parsons (MTP) (1843-1918) (they had married in 1864). Over the next few years their six children were born at the farm: Apphia Jane (1865-1923), John Thomas (1867-1934), Anna Isabella (1869-1950), Dora Alice (1871-1950), Mary Frances (1875-1962), and Oscar Wallace (1879-1922, Dad's father). Oscar gradually took over as farm manager as his father's health began to fail during the late 1890s, and assumed full responsibility in this role at the time of SRP's death in 1905. Oscar and Luella Rich (1878-1937) were married on Christmas Day, 1906. The farm continued to be run as a family operation until the time of MTP's death in 1918, and this is the period to which Dad's earliest memories date, and when John T. Parsons' diary was kept. In 1919, Oscar bought out the other farm heirs, his five siblings; the mortgage that Dad speaks of dates to that time.

Oscar's untimely death in Sept. 1922 marked the end of traditional family farming at the Parsons farm. As Dad relates in one of his essays, soon thereafter the dairy operation was ended, and crop production significantly curtailed, except for annual summer haying. Winter timbering continued, but was no longer done by family members. For another decade or so Luella and her children continued to cultivate a large garden, cut hay, and harvest the declining apple crops. For a few years, beginning in 1923 or 1924, Luella took in summer boarders to supplement farm income, and in 1926 she married Will Thomas (Oscar's first cousin). Will was good company for Luella and the children, but he was not a farmer (although he had a financially disastrous fling at raising sheep for a few years ca. 1930).

Dad enrolled at the University of Maine in 1925, and was not as much at the farm after that; just a year later Bernice began her studies at Bates College. Phil left for the University of Maine in 1930, and Shirl in 1932. Phil and Shirl filled the ice-house for the last time during the winter of 1929-30. The very last gasp of family farming may have been when Shirl and Will Thomas brought in the hay crop ca. 1935. Luella died in 1937, and Will Thomas moved away a year or two later. After World War II Phil briefly considered taking up farming again at the old family place, but these plans did not materialize. The Good Old Days were finally over at the Parsons farm.

I. Life on the Farm

by Merton S. Parsons

People Mentioned in Text

"Dad"	Oscar W. Parsons, 1879-1922
"Mother"	Luella Rich Parsons, 1878-1937
"Bernice," "Bun," "Sister Bernice," "Aunt Bun"	Bernice L. Parsons (Paul), 1909-2006
"Phil," "Brother Phil," "Uncle Phil"	Philip S. Parsons, 1912-1992
"Shirl," "Shirley," "Brother Shirl," "Uncle Shirl"	Shirley R. Parsons, 1914-1996
"Grandmother Parsons"	Mary Thomas Parsons, 1843-1918
"Granddad"	Stephen R. Parsons, 1830-1905
"Aunt Mary"	Mary F. Parsons (Shurtleff, McKnight), 1875-1962
"Aunt Dora"	Dora A. Parsons (Muzzy), 1871-1950
"Uncle Henry"	Henry F. Muzzy, 1856-?
"Aunt Annie"	Anna I. Parsons, 1869-1950
"Uncle John"	John T. Parsons, 1867-1934
Step-Father Will Thomas	William H. Thomas, 1871-1952

The Clifford Family in S. Paris village:

"Aunt Apphia"	Apphia J. Parsons (Clifford), 1865-1923
"Uncle Wall," "Uncle Wallace"	Wallace K. Clifford, 1862-1926
Wallace	1887-1963
Caroline	1889-1970
Earle	1893-1971
Stephen	1896-1959
Mary	1898-2000
Burt	1901-1990
Anne	1904-1958
"Great Uncle Rob"	Robert Thomas, 1843-1919, twin brother of Grandma Parsons
"Uncle Ethan"	Ethan Farris, husband of Luella's sister Etta Rich Farris
The Cummings Family, neighbors	Freeland, Alice, Helen, and Mid
The Swett Family, neighbors	Charles, Mrs. S., Lydia, Henry, Ed, and Oliver
The Lovejoys, neighbors	Alvin and Mame
The Dudleys, neighbors	Lee (1894-1946) and his mother

Photographs of People and Places, 1890-1973

The Buildings and Fields, 1900-1941

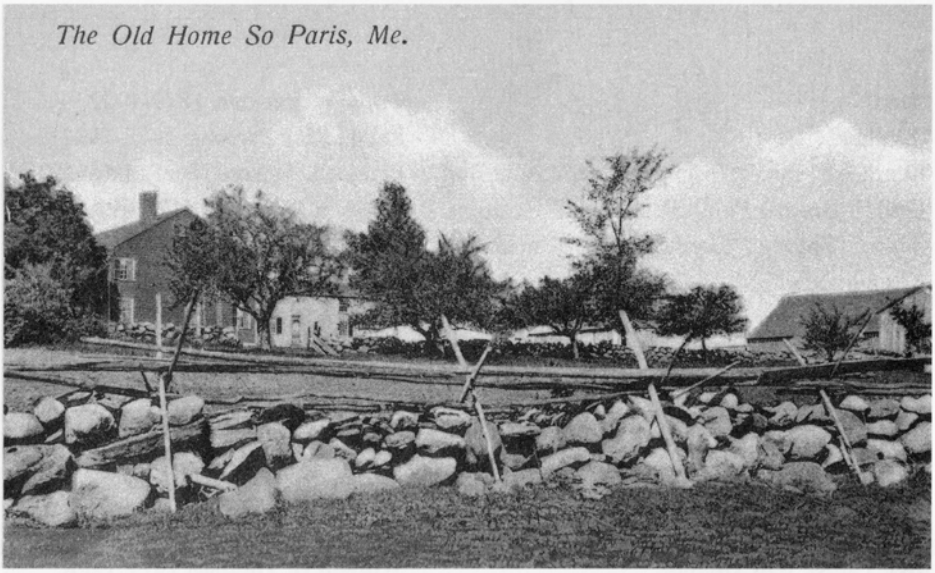


Photo 1. View from the southeast, Summer ca. 1900.

Photo 2. View from the southeast, Winter 1930.

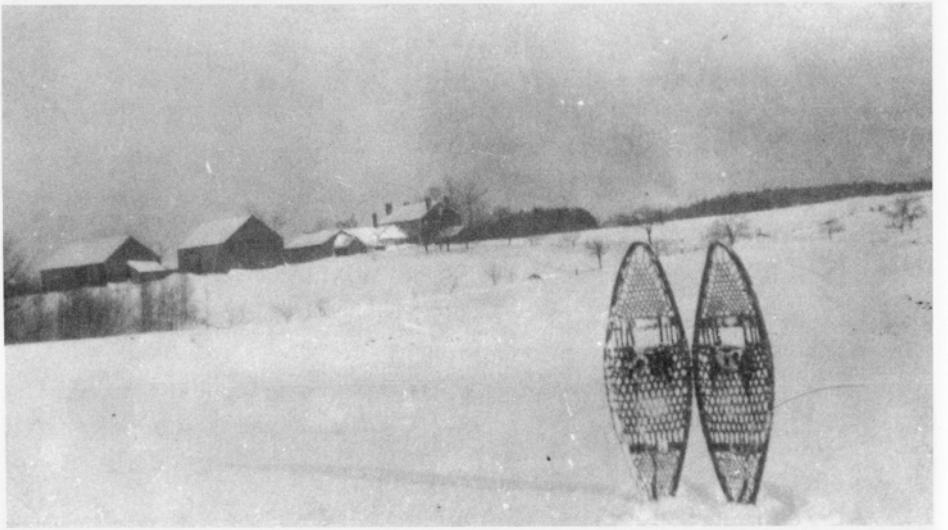
Photo 3. View from the southwest, 1920.

Photo 4. The main house from the southwest, with Bun, 1913.

Photo 5. The main house and ell from the southeast, 1940. The Grain Barn is at the far right.

Photo 6. The main house and ell from the southwest, 1941.

Photo 7. The fields northwest of the house, Spring 1928.



(*upper*) Photo 8. The fields northwest of the house, Winter 1921.

(*lower*) Photo 9. Looking southeast toward house and barns, Winter 1920.

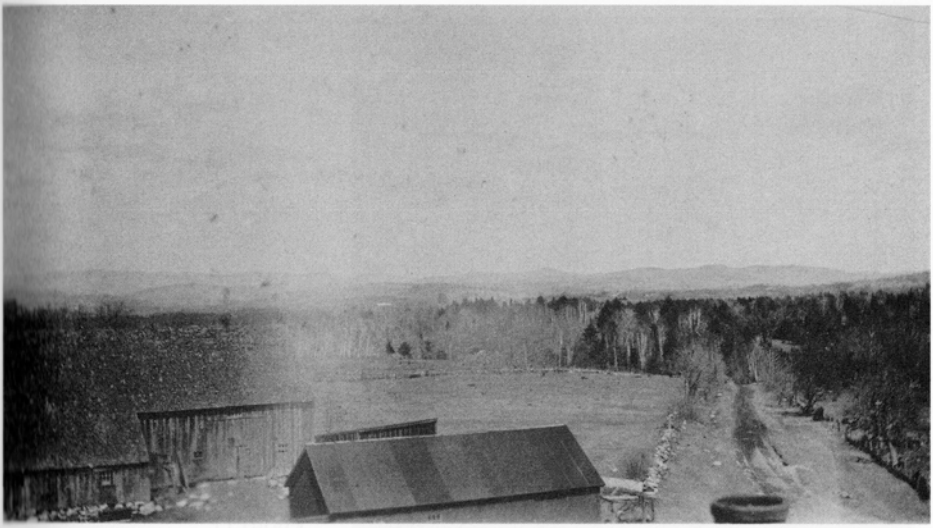


Photo 10. The fields northeast of the house, Spring 1928.

Photo 10A. Cow pasture north of the house, 1920.

The Grandparents, ca. 1900

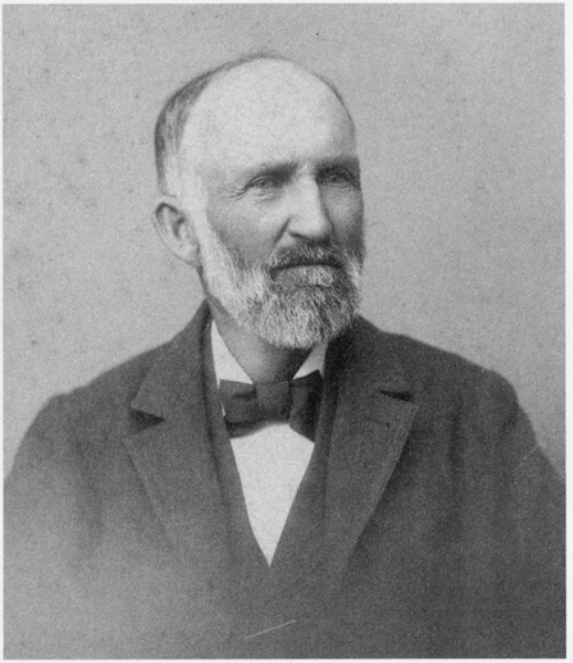


Photo 11.
Stephen R. Parsons.

Photo 12.
Mary Thomas Parsons.

Photo 13. Oscar 1897. Although the press of work at the farm prevented him from graduating from high school, this was to have been his graduation photo.

W. Ripley, r.t. H. J. Merrill, c. O. Parsons, r.g. C. E. Spofford, l.g. L. P. Gerrish, l.t.
P. E. Hathaway, r.e. R. E. Strickland, r.h. C. S. Stuart, f.b. W. Pratt, l.h. E. Stuart, q.b., Mgr.
F. Perkins, sub. l.g. A. E. Fuller, l.e., Capt. G. A. Cutting, sub. l.t.
Average weight, 154 pounds.

Photo 14. Oscar and his football team, South Paris High, 1896-97. Oscar is at the center in the back row.

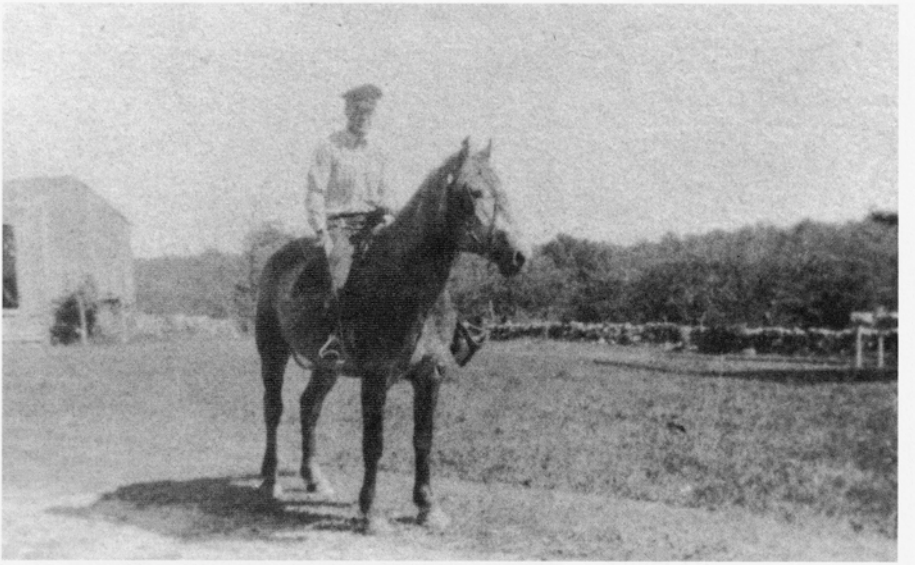


Photo 15. Oscar on horseback at the farm, ca. 1900.

Photo 16. Oscar (on horseback) and relatives in front of the main house, ca. 1900.

Photo 17. Oscar and his dog at the farm, ca. 1900.

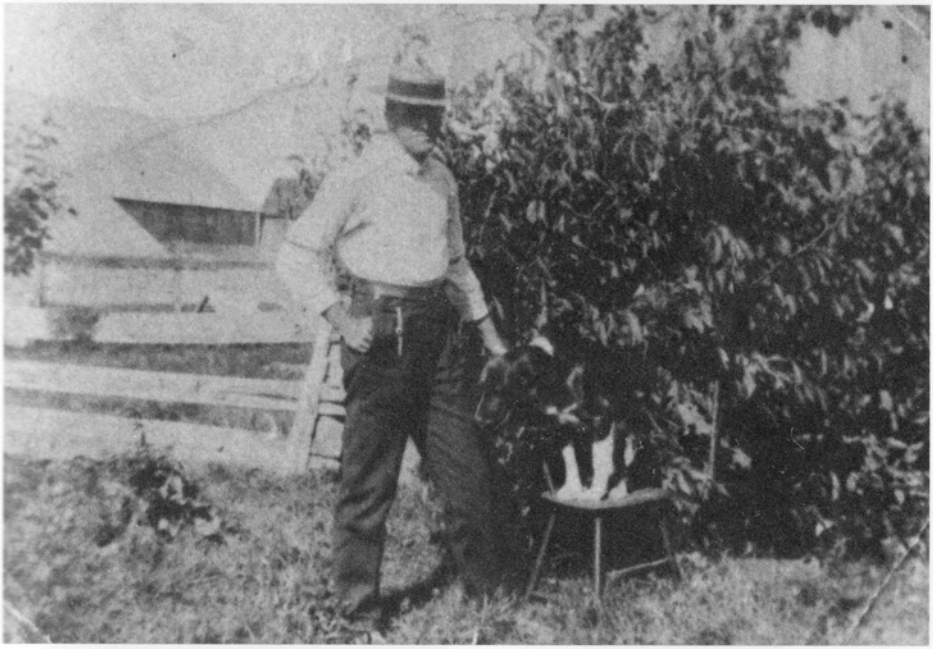


Photo 18. Oscar, 1919.

(left) Photo 19. Oscar and Luella, 1920.

(below left) Photo 20. Luella, 1934.

(below right) Photo 21. Luella, 1936.

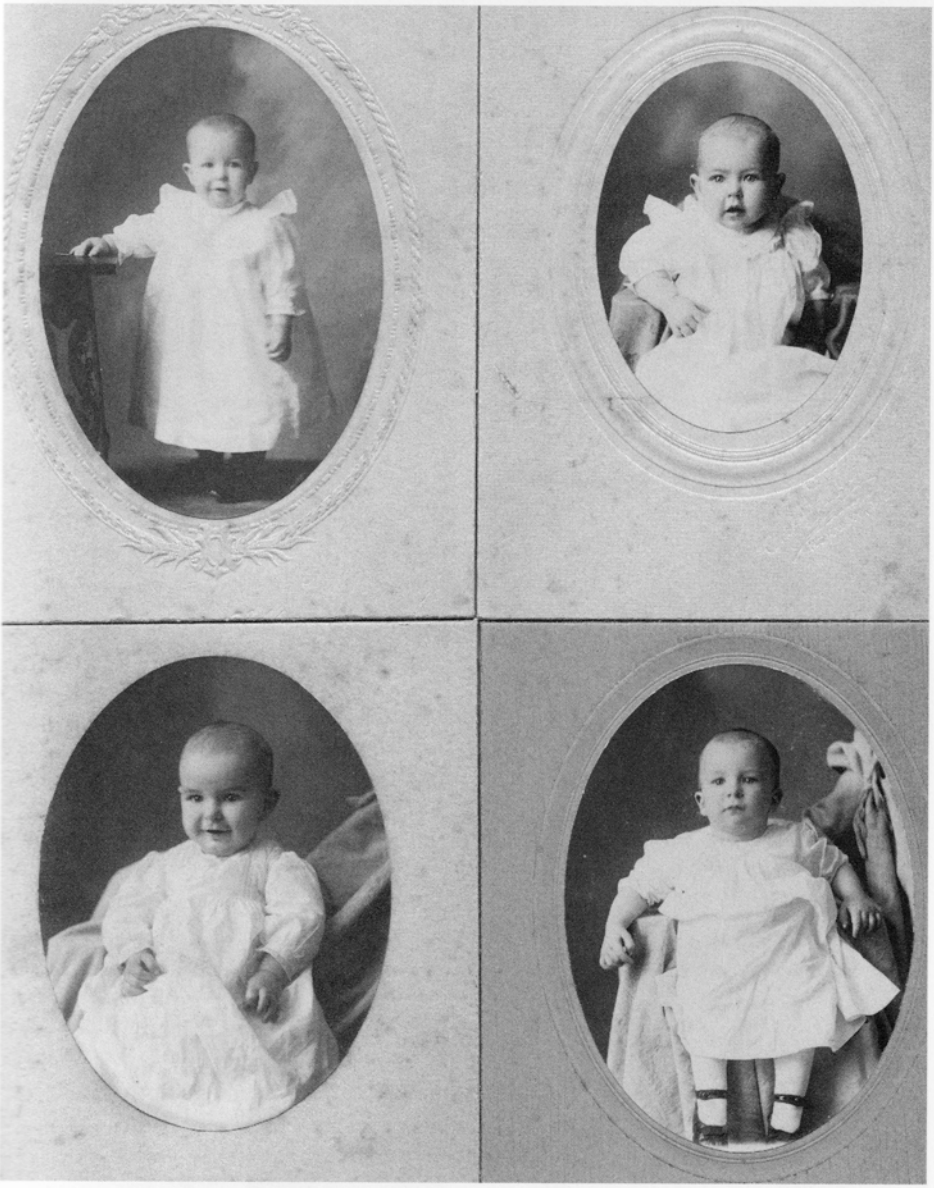
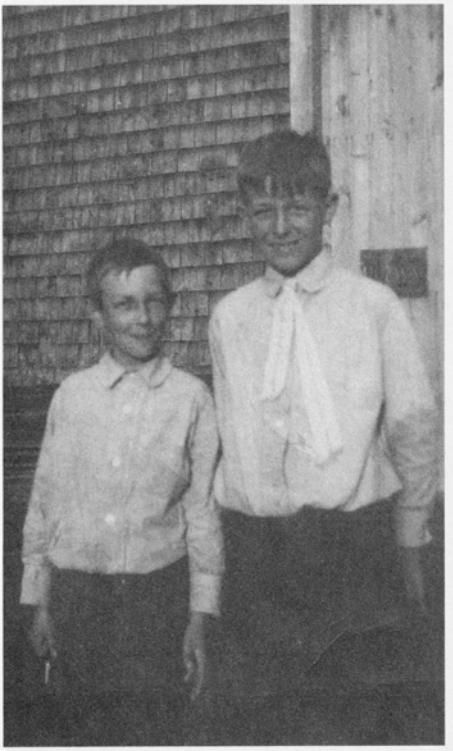
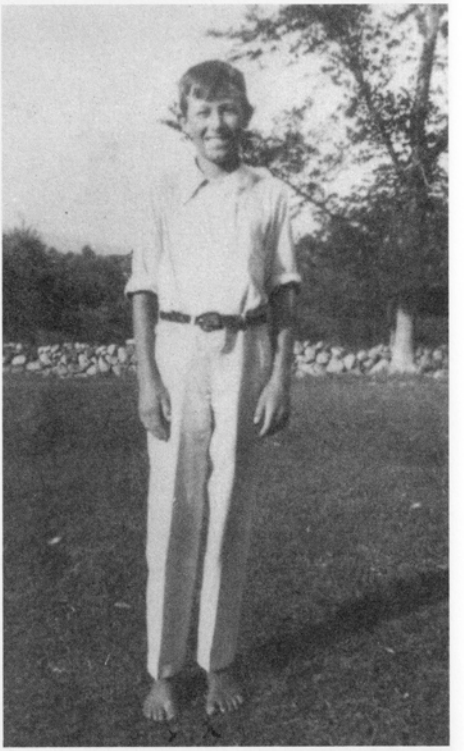


Photo 22. Baby photos. Clockwise from upper left: Mert (1908), Bun (1910), Shirl (1915), Phil (1913).

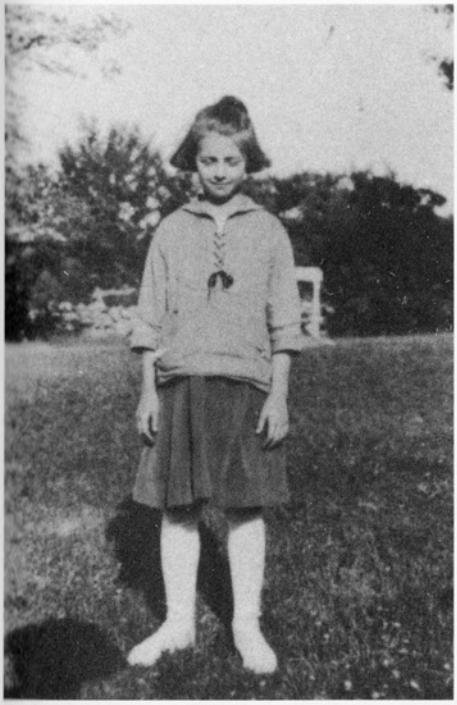




(*top*) Photo 23. Mert, 1913.

(*above left*) Photo 24. Mert and Mid Cummings at the Cummings farm, 1917.

(*above right*) Photo 25. Mert, 1919.



(*above left*)
Photo 26. Bun, 1919.

(*above right*)
Photo 27. Phil and Bun, 1919.

(*right*) Photo 28. Shirl and Bun, 1919.

Photo 29. Phil and Shirl, with calf, 1919.

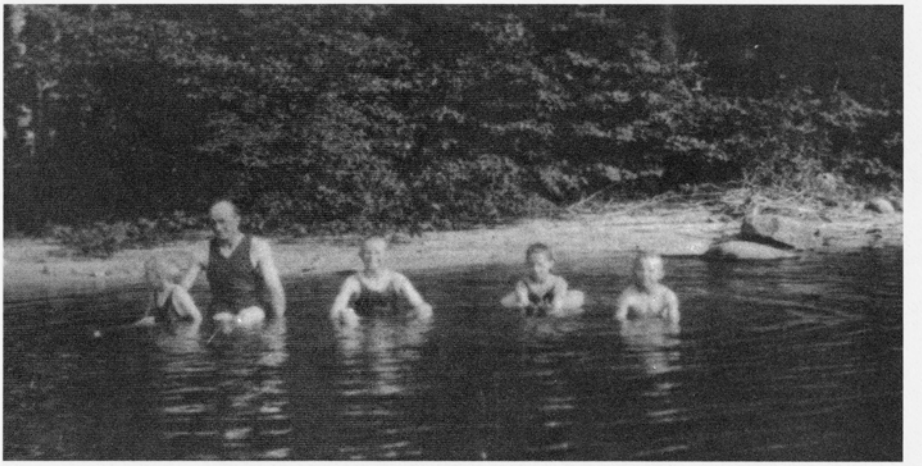


Photo 30. Swimming at Tripp Lake, 1919. Left to right: Shirl, Oscar, Mert, Bun, Phil.

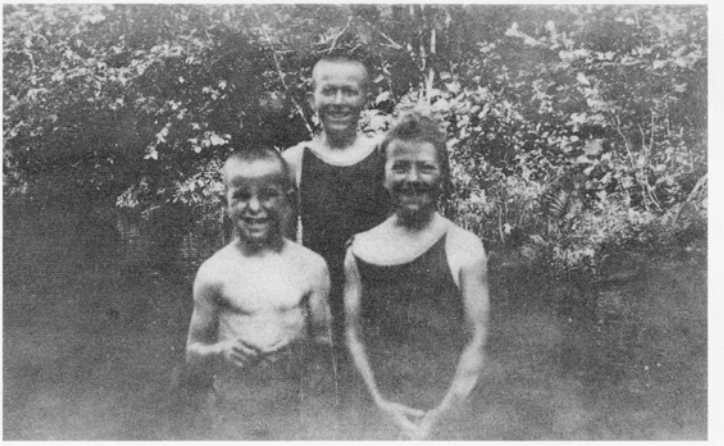


Photo 31. Swimming in the Ice Pond, 1919. Left to right: Phil, Mert, Bun.

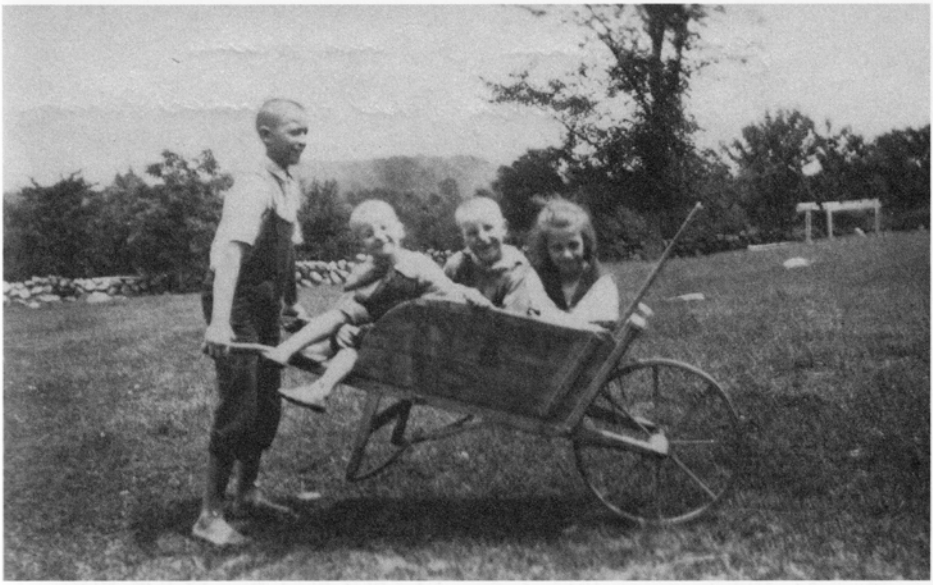


Photo 32. Kids and wheelbarrow, 1919. Left to right: Mert (pushing), Shirl, Phil, Bun.

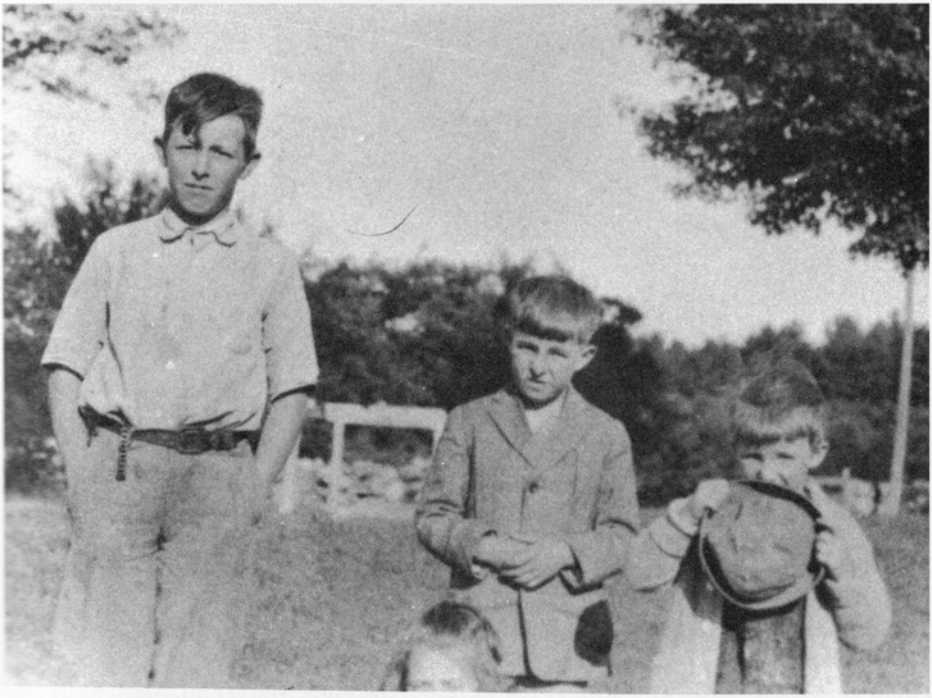


Photo 33. Kids, 1919. Left to right: Mert, Bun (top of head), Phil, Shirl.

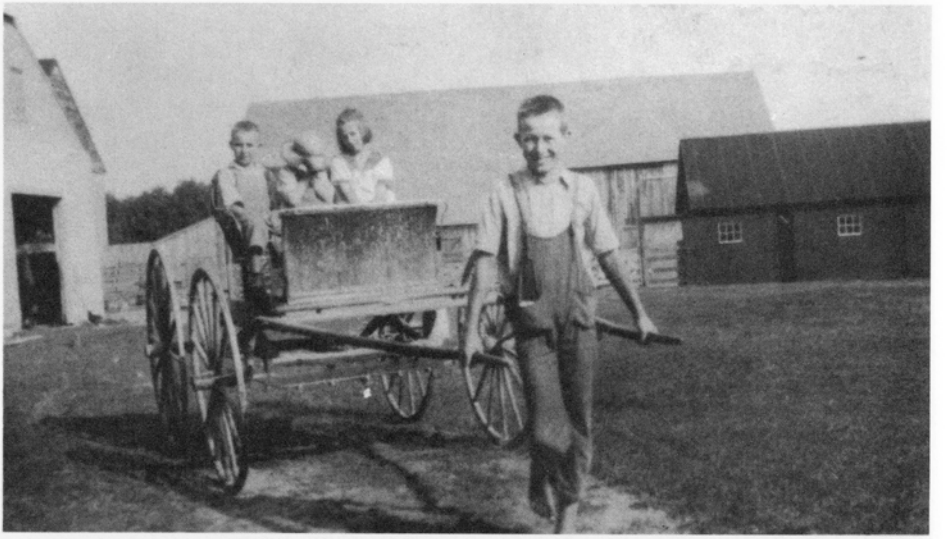


Photo 34. Kids in wagon, 1919. Left to right: Phil, Shirl, Bun, Mert (pulling).

Photo 35. At the old Town Farm, 1919. Left to right: Aunt Mary, Phil, Mert, Shirl (in front of Mert), Bun.

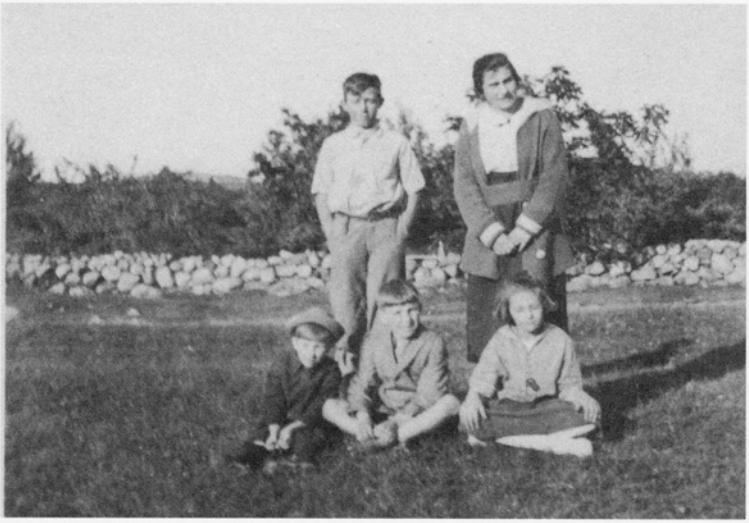


Photo 36. Kids and cousin Anne Clifford, 1919. Left to right: rear, Mert, Anne; front, Shirl, Phil, Bun.

Photo 37. Bun with kittens, 1922. Taken shortly after Oscar's death.

Photo 42. Mert, 1929. Graduation photo, University of Maine.

Photo 43. Bun, 1930.

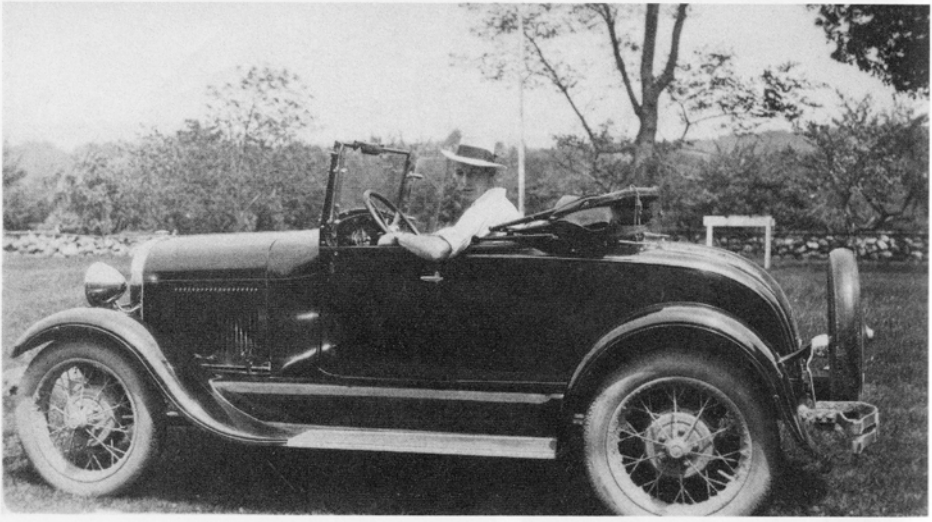


Photo 44. Phil in Ford roadster, 1930.

Photo 45. Shirl trimming brush with scythe, 1934.

Photo 46. Visiting in town, Winter 1935. Left to right: Mert, Bun, Fred Paul, Shirl.

Photo 52. 1922, taken shortly after Oscar's death. Left to right: Mert, Phil, Bun, Shirl, Luella.

Photo 53. 1923, in the yard with dog. Left to right: Shirl, Bun, Phil, Luella (in background).

(top) Photo 54. 1927, on front steps. Left to right: Shirl, Bun, Luella, Phil, Will Thomas.
(middle) Photo 55. 1932, Summer. Left to right: Luella, Shirl, Will Thomas.
(bottom) Photo 56. 1932, early Winter. Left to right: Shirl, Luella, Bun, Fran Johnson (friend), Will Thomas, Phil.

THE ESSAYS

PICKING OVER BEANS
(12/4/50)

In the Winter we had many days when the snow fell, the wind blew, and the result was a blizzard. On such days, particularly if it were a Saturday or if the weather was so bad that we couldn't go to school, Dad would announce at breakfast time that this would be a good day to pick over beans. Then, as soon as the barn chores were finished, he would go up into the shed chamber for the beans which were stored there after threshing. Soon he would appear with a half-bushel measure full of beans and would dump them on the dining room table which Mother had cleared off for the occasion, leaving the oil cloth on.

The whole family and the hired man, if we had one at the time, would sit around the table, each with a pan or dish of some kind in his lap. Reaching out to the pile of beans in the center, he would pull a stream toward himself in a thin layer on the table. All the bad beans, pebbles, bean stalks, and the like would be picked out and thrown aside into a special container. Then the good beans would be pulled into the pan, and so on. With six or seven of us working, the half bushel would soon be finished, and Dad would ask if we wanted to do another. Whether we said "yes" or "no," it made no difference. He always went after another measure full of beans, and so it went.

We children did not object too much to this job since it was warm and cozy sitting in the dining room with a good wood fire in the furnace (an old brick affair, since torn out). We could watch the snow falling and listen to the wind howling around the buildings. However, after two hours or so we would get uneasy and want a change. Then Dad or Mother would try to make some sort of a game out of the job to keep us interested. This would work for awhile, maybe until it was time for everyone to quit for the day.

WENDALL THE HIRED MAN
(1/19/51)

We usually had a hired man on the farm. One who I remember very well was called Wendall. I don't recall his family name.[3] He was in his early twenties, a happy-go-lucky fellow who liked to play with us kids whenever he could. My folks didn't approve of this, partly because he was often playing when he should have been working, and partly, I suspect, because they figured he might be a bad influence on us. Actually I don't think he ever did us any harm. In fact, it was probably the other way around, as the following episode would indicate.

One stormy day when it was too wet for outdoor work or play, we children were out in the Carriage House playing with "the blocks." This was a term we used for the block and tackle that we had for lifting heavy things such as the pigs at slaughter time. This particular outfit was a new one with a special self-locking device (something like on

Venetian blinds) of which Dad was very proud. With a weight on the hook, it would lock at any point and hold indefinitely until someone who knew how released it.

We would put a small stick of stove wood in the hook for a seat and take turns pulling each other up into the top of the shed some 30 feet from the floor, the blocks having been attached to the ridge pole by Dad for some other purpose. This was a slightly dangerous business and never had parental approval, but could sometimes be done without their knowledge.

On this day we were enjoying rides up to the ridge pole and back when Wendall showed up and wanted to join us. So we let him get on the seat, and all of us kids joined together to give him a fast pull-up to the very peak of the shed. When he was about half way up he began to realize that he was afraid of high places. He called for us to stop, but we could not imagine anyone being afraid at that height and kept on pulling until he was as high as the blocks could take him. Then we let the self-locking device take over, and both we and he soon learned that he didn't know how to release it.

So there was Wendall, scared to death 30 feet above the floor, sitting on a thin piece of firewood, and shrieking for us to let him down. When we didn't, he got angry and started swearing. Then we were afraid to let him down. So we just left him there and went to play in the house without telling anyone of Wendall's plight. Sometime later (it seemed like two hours) Dad returned from town and found Wendall up there, still shrieking, but also a little red in the face for being found in such a scrape. Moreover, his seat was sore. Dad let him down, scolded him mildly, and told him to get to work on the chores. Later, with a twinkle in his eye, Dad asked us about it but did not punish us. Wendall never played with us much after that.

WATCHING THE COWS
(1/30/51)

In the Summer our cows spent each day in the pasture, and one of my early jobs was to "put them down," as we called it. This meant driving them (with the help of the dog) from the barnyard down the road about a quarter mile to the pasture gate. This was a nice job that could be finished quickly, but not so with a related job that always came along later in the Summer when the pasture began to dry up. Then it was the duty of us kids to "watch the cows" every morning. This consisted of letting them graze in the dooryard and along the adjacent roadside for an hour or so, but we had to be there all the time to keep them out of the garden and away from the apple trees.

This was not so bad at first and in nice weather. But later it got monotonous, and in bad weather it became downright disagreeable. But Dad would point out that we had to have a certain sized milk check to pay the feed bill, to say nothing of buying groceries and shoes for us kids. Furthermore, he hinted strongly that any failure on our part would be grounds for a spanking or something similar. So we would watch the cows every morning. But once in a while we would get interested in a diversion like throwing windfall apples at each other and before we knew it the cows were in the garden, and Dad would come roaring around the corner of the house and catch us and the cows, both at fault.

Usually he only scolded us on such occasions, but once he tanned my hide a little and I probably deserved it. It was a cold windy day in early September, and to keep warm we kids would lie down in the tall grass and let the wind swish over us. One of us was supposed to keep watch all the time, but apparently no one did for a while. Suddenly we heard a shriek from Dad and we all jumped up to see the cows right in the middle of our best piece of sweet corn which was due to be picked for the canning factory in a few days. The cows were having a fine time eating the fodder and the ears and trampling the stalks into the ground. We knew what a terrible crime we had committed and were tempted to run and hide. But we decided it better to help Dad drive the cows out of the corn field, which we did. And as a result our punishment was very light.

Looking back at it, watching the cows seems like a rather pleasant task. But I remember that we were always happy when Dad shouted "Alright, put them down."

Photo 57. Mert and Phil "putting them down," 1919.

OUR FIRST CAR
(3/2/51)

When I was a small boy, the customary means of transportation around the countryside was by horses—drawing buggies or wagons in the Summer, and sleighs or sleds in the Winter. But by around 1914 enough automobiles had come into use so that they were recognized as possible competition for the horse, at least in the Summer. Most of the early cars were owned by the village people, especially the doctors. I remember also that one of the first was driven by Rev. Chester Gore Miller, the Universalist pastor, whose son Wilburn was a good friend of mine later.

These early cars were rather unreliable. They broke down frequently on the road, they were hand cranked, and tire trouble was expected on any trip of 20 miles or more. Furthermore, they often frightened horses on the road, and numerous laws were passed to restrict this new device that threatened to upset the horse and buggy era.

Gradually, however, the auto gained acceptance, and by 1916 my Dad was in the mood to own one. At that time, due to wartime prosperity, he could also raise the price

of a Model T (around $400, I believe). So, sometime that year, probably in Sept. after he received his sweet corn check, we became the proud owners of a new Ford "Touring Car." It was a two-seated affair with a collapsible top and a brass radiator. It was high off the ground with 30 × 3½ tires, a planetary transmission, and all the other features of a 1916 Ford.

Dad learned to drive without too much trouble. The first year we used it only for going to town and for Sunday afternoon trips around the nearby countryside, never more than 10-15 miles from home. We had numerous adventures even then. Blowouts and mechanical troubles of other kinds were frequent. We had quite a kit of tools under the rear seat, including a vulcanizing outfit for patching inner tubes. Changing a tire was not bad, but sometimes we ran out of tires or tubes and then would have to seek help from passersby or some progressive farmer who also had a car and some spare parts.

Another problem was often encountered on steep hills. The gas tank was under the front seat and had a gravity feed to the engine. On real steep hills the tank had to be about full in order for the engine to get any gas. I remember one Sunday we were coming home quite late in the afternoon and were taking the shortcut from Fore Street up the long, steep hill by Alvin Lovejoy's place. Part way up the engine sputtered and stopped for lack of gas. The tank was half full, but we knew what the matter was and we also knew what had to be done. We could either turn around and try to back up the hill, or we could walk up to Lovejoy's and borrow some kerosene. They had no car, but would have kerosene for their lamps. The latter seemed to be the better solution, so Dad started walking up the hill. In due time he returned with a gallon or two of kerosene which he poured into the gas tank. Then came the test. Would the additional fuel be enough to keep the engine running? Dad backed up for a good distance to get a flying start, and then we all held our breaths and bounced around as the Ford roared into the grade wide open. Halfway up and still going strong, three quarters, and then we were over the crest and safe. We stopped at Alvin's to return his kerosene can and to talk briefly about autos and the weather. Then we chugged the remaining mile home, feeling quite proud of ourselves.

PICNICS IN THE PINE WOODS
(3/14/51)

We had a beautiful "pine woods," as we called it, down in front (southeast) of the house. The best of it was all cut during 1918-1922, and now that area is covered with small, but growing trees—pines and others. Up to the time I was 12, or so, it was a fine stand of big white pines, some of them 70 or 80 feet tall, straight as an arrow, and three feet in diameter at the base. They probably were second growth, but gave an idea of what the virgin timber must have been like when the ancestors cleared the land starting in the 1780s.

These pines were free from branches close to the ground and their tops made such a dense shade that there was very little undergrowth, nothing but pine needles and pine cones on the ground. The slightest breeze would set up a sighing sound in the tops which we always thought of as whispering. All in all, it was a lovely spot and we used it frequently during the Summer for picnics.

At that time we had lots of relatives living in South Paris—the Cliffords, the Muzzys, Aunt Mary and various others, to say nothing of their friends. Often on a Sunday afternoon some 20-30 of them would arrive after having first gone to church. They would usually come by horse and wagon, although Uncle Henry and Aunt Dora sometimes walked up, following a woods road which I never could find later. And by 1916, of course, some came by auto. They would all bring baskets of food and drink—sandwiches, pie, cake, coffee, milk, lemonade, and so forth. We would walk down into the pines carrying something and with us youngsters playing noisily as we went along.

Then the food would be arranged by the ladies and we would all eat and drink merrily. We kids often ate too much and had "tummy aches" as a result. I remember once when Brother Phil ate entirely too much. He was about eight then, and after everyone else had finished, and during which time he had consumed at least a normal amount, he walked around from basket to basket picking out and eating the most tasty items left. After a while, however, even his appetite failed, and he began to turn green and feel woozy. He was very uncomfortable for an hour or so, during which interval he told Mother that he was "the sickest I've ever been" and that "I'll never eat food again." But nature took its course, and he soon recovered. By next day he was back to normal and eating like a horse.

At these picnics we also had various games. Some of them, like the 3-legged race, were never played at any other time. Most of the games were held out in a clearing, of about one acre, just south of the picnic grove. This area is now covered with young pines 30 feet tall, but then it was free of trees and quite smooth. It must have been plowed at some earlier time. Anyway, it made a fine place for games and it was fun for us kids to watch the older folks act young and foolish.

THE SCHOOL TEAM
(3/28/51)

During our parents' generation, the country school had largely gone out, although the school house in our community was still standing but not used. It is there to this day—that little house at the foot of Schoolhouse Hill, about a half mile west of the cemetery at "the corner." It was probably built about 1860.

We kids all attended school in South Paris, three miles from the farm, and our transportation during grade school days was the "school team." This was the term we always used whether the conveyance was a wagon or sleigh (depending on the season) and one horse or two (depending on the number of children). The trip took anywhere from 40 minutes to two hours, both morning and afternoon, and I wonder now why we took it so casually.

In the Winter particularly it was often a very disagreeable trip with the temperature sometimes at 10-20 degrees below zero and with a strong wind howling over the hills. Our hot bricks helped some, but not much. And sometimes the roads would become impassable from drifted snow, even for the horses, and we would have to walk part of the way. Of course, if the weather was too bad in the morning we would just stay home for the day, but sometimes a storm developed during the day and it became a question

of whether or not we could get back home. We had relatives in town—Aunt Mary, Aunt Dora and family, and the Cliffords—and we could stay with them in an emergency, but I do not recall that we ever did.

And then in April came mud time. The dirt roads thawed and the mud became hub deep. Sometimes the horse or horses could barely pull the wagon through the worst spots, which meant that we kids plus the driver would all have to walk for a ways. But we didn't mind that, and had lots of fun playing in the mud.

In fact, the school team was pretty good sport except in the coldest weather. It was an opportunity for talking, fighting, watching for birds and flowers in season, and even for a little mild courting for the older ones. Sometimes we had a driver who was a good story teller, and for awhile we had one who used to sing to us. All in all the memories are pleasant.

A constant problem with the school team was the route to be followed and which kids were to be picked up first. This was a matter of some importance since the route was perhaps 10 miles long which meant that some of the children had to leave rather early in the morning. As I recall it, we used to leave around 7:30 AM most of the time. Mid Cummings and his sister Helen would walk up to our place and wait for the school team with us. Then we would go through the woods to the Swett place, and from there would follow a poor road, long since abandoned, across to the East Oxford Road, where the first stop was at the Record's place. That was a cold spot up on a windy hill. Several other families, including the Judds, lived on that road closer to town, and the last stop was about one mile out of town.

Getting home from school was the same thing in reverse, except that some attempt was made to get those kids home first who had left earliest in the morning. We generally got home by 5 PM or so, in time for supper around 5:30. But sometimes when the roads were bad from snow or mud it was much later, and looking back at it I suspect that our parents were quite worried at times. Such a thing never occurred to us kids, of course.

TAKING THE MILK TO TOWN
(4/18/51)

We had a small herd of dairy cows, generally around 10-12, and sold milk and cream to the Turner Center Creamery which had a branch at South Paris. In those days the milk had to be delivered about every other day, and after I became 10 or 11 it often fell to me to do this when it didn't conflict with school. Here again it was a question of horsepower, using a wagon in Summer and a sleigh or pung in the Winter. We generally used a light driving horse since the load was never more than five or six 5-gallon cans, except maybe in the Spring when the cows were really producing.

The first thing to do was to harness the horse. This meant leading him from the stable to the Carriage House where the harness, wagons, and sleigh were kept. I learned to harness a horse at an early age, but always had some trouble until I got to be tall enough to reach its head. Furthermore, for awhile we had a very nervous red horse named Rocket, who would jump six feet into the air for the slightest of reasons. He must have been badly used by his

previous owner. We were gentle with him, but he never got over his jumpiness. But once he was harnessed and on the road, he was a fine horse—speedy, strong, and willing.

After the harnessing step, I would drive around back of the house to the cellar door where Dad would already have brought the milk up from the cellar. He and I would load it, keeping an eye on Rocket all the time. Dad would give me some last-minute instructions, and I would be off. The trip to town was usually easy since it was mostly downhill and I would often be at the creamery in 30-40 minutes. Then I had to wait my turn for unloading. Sometimes this took another half hour, or so, but I didn't mind unless the weather was bad or unless Rocket got scared and started jumping. It was fun for me to watch the other people—men, women, and children—who were there for the same purpose, and maybe to talk with someone I knew.

After the milk was unloaded, I had to pick up some empty milk cans and then I usually had a few errands to do. Often I would go to the feed store—the "grain mill" we called it—to get a bag or two of grain for the cows. Then I would usually drive over to the business section of town—called the "square"—and buy a few groceries, using a list provided by Mother. This meant I had to find a place to tie up Rocket, and sometimes that was a problem—just like finding a parking place for a car these days. At that time the square was lined with hitching posts for horses and there were also facilities in the rear of some of the stores. I remember that in the rear of Bolster's department store were several open sheds for that purpose and they were called "Bolster's Sheds."

Once I tied Rocket up at a post on the square, using a halter rope of the usual type. But I didn't get the rope tight enough around the post and it gradually slipped down. Rocket must have lowered his head for some reason and let the rope slide all the way to the bottom. Then he tried to raise his head suddenly, the rope caught, and he became frantic and started dancing. I happened to be returning with my groceries about then and when I saw what was going on I was just as scared as he was. I tried to release the rope but couldn't. I was about ready to start praying when a friendly man came along and helped me get the rope back up the post, after which Rocket stopped jumping and began to relax. I was sure glad to get him unhitched and out of town with no serious damage.

When I had errands to do, Dad would give me some money—usually enough and no more. Sometimes, if I raised the question, he would tell me I could have 5 or 10 cents for candy. On those occasions I would be very happy and would get back to the square as fast as possible. Then I would go into Fred Wright's store (later operated by Lucius Davis, but still called Wright's store by some of the old timers) and feast my eyes on the candy display. After much thought I generally ended up buying some big chocolates that sold for about 1 cent each, probably about 30 cents per lb. The clerk would sometimes get a little impatient with my long deliberations on what to buy with my 5 or 10 cents, but eventually I would reach a decision and would receive my purchase in a brown paper bag. Then on the way home I would have a big time, trying to make the candy last for the entire trip, but no more.

The return trip took longer since it was uphill, but I was usually home before noon. Once home I would account for the money, turn the balance over to Mother or Dad, and be ready for dinner.

FOURTH OF JULY
(5/14/51)

Our big holidays were the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. And the Fourth, I believe, was the best of all to us kids. We would plan ahead for weeks and would save our pennies for fireworks. We generally had a little money then, earned by "thinning corn" during June in our sweet corn fields. I remember once having 40 cents to spend, which seemed like a lot of money then, both to me and the folks. But I spent it all in one big splurge for fireworks, and was broke for the rest of the Summer.

What we bought mostly were firecrackers and torpedoes for noise, and Roman candles for display. We kids would usually spend all of our pocket money and Dad would sometimes help out a little too. In any case we generally assembled quite a variety of stuff including a supply of "slowmatch," a slow burning stick that you could use for lighting firecrackers.

As the Fourth grew near our anticipation became keener until we could hardly talk or think of anything else. Our program was to retire early the night before and get up early on the morning of the Fourth, sometimes by 5 AM, and to start with the noise makers—firecrackers, torpedoes, horns, and rattlers. This would wake up the folks and maybe the neighbors, but once a year they could take it.[4] By breakfast time our supply was about gone except, of course, for the Roman candles and rockets which were saved for that night after dark.

After breakfast, if there had been no serious burns or concussions, we would go out in the yard and look for duds—firecrackers that had failed to explode for some reason. These we would break in two leaving a bit of paper to hold the pieces together, so that the result was a V-shaped affair. Then we would touch a match to the powder at the point of the V and fire would shoot out from both "barrels." We called them "fizzlers" and thought it was great fun. But before noon these were all gone and the fireworks were over except for the night display and for the nursing of burns.

WOODS WORK
(6/28/51, 4/6/70, 9/15/70)

Every Winter we took to the woods. This was a part of farming just as much as planting sweet corn in May or harvesting hay in July. Around the end of October, as soon as the apples were picked, we would start getting ready for work in the woods. We would get out the axes, saws, wedges, peavies, chains, and other equipment. The axes would be sharpened, with me and the other kids turning the grindstone while Dad or the hired man held the tool. The saws were usually taken to "Myron" in the village. Myron Maxim had a shop in town where he did miscellaneous repairing of guns, sewing machines, bicycles, etc. He also sharpened tools and was considered to be an expert in that field. I remember how Dad used to specify exactly what the saw was to be used for, such as frozen pine or unfrozen hardwood, and Myron would file the saw accordingly.

Then sometime in November the men would take our axes, saws, and wedges and head for the woods. For several days, and with us kids helping on Saturdays, they would fell trees and work them up into saw logs, bolts, pulp wood, or firewood according to the type and size of the market available. Any hauling of the product would have to wait for a few weeks until the snow was deep enough to permit easy access with the horses and bobsleds. A good depth of snow was necessary to fill in the rough spots in the woods roads as well as to provide a surface for the sleds to run on. At that point, Dad would hitch up the horses and start hauling the salable stuff to the mills in South Paris. The best he could do was two trips a day, but this he used to do regularly except when the weather was too bad.

We kids enjoyed woods work in the Winter. It was good clean work in the snowy out-of-doors with no insects like in the Summer. We generally would build a fire out of dry limbs from the fallen trees, and on real cold days this was useful for heating the wedges so they could be driven without bouncing. It was dangerous work too, but we didn't think much about that. I remember once how Brother Phil almost was flattened by a big pine which the hired man and I had cut. Phil was about 7 or 8 then, and was playing around with his little ax while we slowly worked the crosscut saw through the 30-inch butt of the tree. He had been well out of danger range, but just as the tree started to crack and fall we looked up and there he was almost in its path. We shouted and he started to run, but directly toward the point of fall rather than away from it. Fortunately he kept his feet and just barely escaped the trunk and big limbs of the pine. I'm sure some of the smaller limbs brushed him, but they did no damage, except to his state of mind, and ours. That was a close call and we never told Mother about it until years later.

Our woods work had several phases, with some change in emphasis from year to year. The timber or long lumber phase was mostly white pine, although we sometimes sold some hardwood logs, depending on demand and what we had in the woods. Sometimes we sold some firewood (in 4-foot lengths called cordwood) but this was not very profitable and mainly our sales were either timber (long lumber or logs), pulpwood (normally in 4-foot pieces), or bolts (also about 4 feet long) for wood working operations in town.

A minor product was hemlock bark, used in tanning leather. That was the only kind of bark we ever sold in my time. This had to be peeled off the logs during the Summer when the sap was running and when the bark would slip away easily. Even then it was hard work, particularly for big old trees with tough bark one or more inches thick. Sometimes pulpwood had to be peeled. It was also a miserable job because of flies and mosquitoes. So we didn't do much peeling if it could be avoided. I recall that one Summer, about 1920, we had an excess of rain in June, and Dad, fearing that the crop would be scanty, took us into the woods to cut and peel pulp wood. It was a mess—a combination of insects, hot weather, and sticky pitch from the fir trees. Fortunately, the weather improved soon, along with Dad's disposition, and our peeling job ended within a few days.

We frequently cut hemlock for lumber since it was a favorite wood for cow stables, at least for under and behind the cows. It was thought to wear well in such use. Another interesting thing about hemlock: the knots were very hard and sometimes, especially when

frozen, would dull an ax almost as badly as a stone would. If an ax would stand up to cutting hemlock knots (when limbing out a tree), that was the acid test of steel quality.

Cutting pine in the Winter was pretty good sport and I helped with it for several years starting when I was about 12 in 1919. This was when Dad took over the farm from the heirs following his mother's death in 1918. We had a beautiful stand of tall white pine running back from the old Town Farm road heading south from the house. Uncle John was working for Dad then, and we usually had another hired man, such as Lee Dudley, to help part time. These two hired men, with my help, would cut the trees and help Dad load the logs onto the bobsled, after which Dad would haul them to one of the mills in South Paris, making two trips a day. Cutting was all done by hand. This was long before the day of the chain saw. We used axes and crosscut saws (6 feet in length).

In planning a logging operation, the first step perhaps was to select a suitable starting point. This would be at one end or side of the lot with due consideration for topography, access to woods roads, etc. On the big pine lot we started at the lower, eastern end, next to the 60-acre lot, and worked back from south to north, cutting a strip perhaps 100 feet wide, and then repeating.

To fell a tree, first of all, you find a suitable one. Then you hold a short conference at the foot of the tree, noting how it leans and try to find a clear space for it to fall into. If it has a strong lean, you had better cooperate with it, although you can use wedges to modify the fall. Next, with an ax or saw you cut a notch on the side of the tree toward which the tree is to fall. This notch should be perhaps 3-6 inches deep and as low as practical, so as to leave as small a stump as possible. After notching (and resting awhile), two men would start with the crosscut saw on the opposite side of the tree, making a level cut aimed at about the middle of the notch. This sawing was slow and hard work, and might take as much as 40-60 minutes for a large tree. Frequent stops were necessary to rest and to drive in the wedges used to tilt the tree in the right direction and to keep the saw from binding and to encourage the tree to fall in the desired direction. In cold weather we would build a fire to heat the wedges so they would catch in the saw cut and not bounce out from the frost. You can also influence the direction of fall by leaving more uncut wood on one side to pull the tree in that direction.

Finally the tree would be nearly cut through and would lean and creak. Then extra caution was needed to make sure it fell where it was aimed. It would not do to cut all the way through; this would leave the tree out of control. Enough uncut wood had to be left for control, but enough had to be cut to allow the tree to fall. This required frequent consultations and much wedge tapping by the men, along with warnings to me and any other kids who might be present to keep out of the way. The tree should fall when perhaps 85-90% of the distance to the notch has been cut. At that point the leaning tree would start falling amid shouts of "timber" by the crew and down it would go "with a horrible crash."

The above is for trees of about 12 inches diameter and up at the base. Smaller trees can often be cut to advantage with only an ax, but this will mean more difficulty in controlling direction, without use of wedges.

Once the tree was down, it was my job to help "limb out" which meant cutting off the limbs with an ax so that the tree could be cut up into clean logs of 12-16 feet in length.

The limbs, at least the larger ones, were trimmed out in lengths of 8-12 feet for firewood and piled up in suitable spots for later hauling to the woodpile at the house. The logs were left as they were cut, to be picked up within a day or two and hauled to town. The brush was mostly burned as we went along, but some was left to rot away over the years, making brush piles for the wild life and eventually humus for the next crop of trees.

Loading the logs, which were 12-18 feet long and 8-30 inches in diameter, was sort of a specialized job and perhaps not as simple as it sounds. The logs would lie on the ground, about as the trees fell, and the sled would be drawn alongside of them by the horses. Then the binding chains would be untangled and properly arranged so that the load could be secured on the sled. Next two "skids" would be put in place to roll the logs on from the ground up to the sled top or "bunk." These skids were small, smooth logs about 5 inches in diameter and perhaps 10 feet long, probably spruce because it was light and tough. After the skids were in place, the men and boys, armed with peavies or cantdogs, would roll and slide the logs into place, moving the sled from time to time as necessary. The logs were heavy and usually slippery from snow and ice, and it was no easy job. The two outside logs on the bottom layer would be fastened tightly to the sled with "corner-bind" chains, two for each log. These were iron chains some 8-10 feet long that were fed through a metal bracket on the bunk and then around the log and clamped tightly with a special device on the chain for that purpose. After the bottom layer of logs was in place, additional layers would be put on top with the load gradually narrowing as it grew higher. Finally, after moving the sled several times to pick up more logs, the load would be topped off at perhaps 6-8 feet in height, the final binding ("wrap") chains tightened around the whole load, and the driver would take his place top front to begin the trip to the mill. The goal was to haul 1000 board feet each trip, and this meant a fairly big load.

In reducing a tree to logs, we usually had the option of making logs 12, 14, or 16 feet in length, this by agreement with the mill in town. Some figuring was required to get the best combinations from any tree. It depended not only on the total length of the tree, but also on crooks or other defects, if any, and on the rate of taper. The latter was important because the log rule (Doyle, I believe) used at the mill to measure each log was applied to the small end to get diameter. Then the number of board feet in the log was found by reading from a table set up for various lengths and diameters. Sometimes a log with lots of taper would measure (scale) more at 12 feet in length than at 14. Incidentally, the scaling of the logs at the mill was always a point of great interest between the parties concerned, since the payment was at X dollars per 1000 board feet. The mill usually had several men doing the scaling, each with a reputation as to his accuracy, generosity, etc. I recall that Dad liked a scaler named Will Cushman (father of my school friends Lester and Bernard Cushman). Dad felt that Will always did an honest job of scaling, and so far as I ever knew, the mill owners felt the same.

Selling timber or any other woods product required arrangements with a buyer as to specifications, price, etc. So far as I know this was all done without a written contract. The main outlets were Will Kenny's sawmill, the Paris Manufacturing Company, commonly known as the "sled factory"; and the Mason Manufacturing Co., known as the

"Toy Shop." These were all in South Paris. Kenny's was a water powered mill on Stoney Brook, just before it joined the Little Androscoggin. The other two were steam-powered outfits producing finished wood articles.

The pulp wood operation was quite different in some ways. It involved different kinds of trees, mainly spruce, fir, and poplar ("popple" as we called it). It also permitted use of smaller trees and consequently slightly different tools. For example, with pulpwood we often used a "buck saw" for cutting the trees into proper lengths (about 4 feet). This was a thin-bladed saw about 2.5 feet long fitted into a wooden frame to permit effective handling. The frame had a turn buckle to tighten the saw, and the sawing was done by one man with both hands holding the frame. It was a good tool for trees up to about 10 inches in diameter.

Pulpwood in our vicinity was moved by rail to a pulp or paper mill at some distance. This meant we had to load the wood "on the cars" at a rail siding in town. The railroad company had a time limit of about two days for completing loading, and made an extra charge for any excess time. So we had to hustle and often would hire a neighbor and his team to help out.

The "bolts" operation was like pulpwood in many ways, but the product had a different use, going to local mills to provide stock for toys, etc. It was usually a softwood deal (pine, fir, "popple," etc.). Hauling bolts, like pulpwood, was done with a special frame mounted on the logging sleds. It was made of two logs, perhaps 20 feet long, fitted with cross pieces some 3-4 feet long to give a narrow body or frame onto which the wood could be piled and tied down if necessary.

On occasion there would be special demands for certain kinds of lumber. During World War I, for example, the local snowshoe factory (Tubbs at Norway) had big government orders to fill. This in turn meant a demand for White Ash logs regarded as the best wood for snowshoe frames. This variety of tree was not too plentiful, but we had some in the south woodlot next to the apple orchard (the Young Orchard). Tubbs offered $50 per thousand board feet delivered, which was a big price in those days, almost too good to be true. So we hunted out the White Ash trees of proper size and straightness, and sold several loads. Then we went back to White Pine which brought only about $20 per thousand board feet, but was more plentiful.

Another specialty was "birdseye" maple, a sugar maple tree that for some reason developed a striking grain that made it highly prized for furniture. We did not normally cut sugar maples since most of them were reserved for maple sirup, but sometimes a birdseye tree would be discovered when boring the holes for sap spials. Such a tree might be marked and cut later for furniture wood.

One of our big woods jobs was getting firewood for the next season, and we worked at that off and on all Winter. Every Winter found us cutting and hauling firewood or fuel wood for cooking and for heating the big old farmhouse (certain rooms at least) the following Winter. We didn't try to heat the whole house, but only about three rooms: the kitchen and dining room every day throughout the day, and into the night for the dining room. This was where we kids did much of our homework from school and where Uncle John did his reading and writing. In addition, we used the downstairs southwest

bedroom as a sort of family room. In fact, we called it "our room," and kept it heated part of the time. Our firewood consumption on the farm was probably about 30-50 cords per year.

The firewood was a mixture of many different varieties of trees. A lot of it would be white pine from the limbs and tops of our pine operation. Some would be gray birch, a small tree used only for firewood. Some would be hardwood such as sugar or rock maple, yellow birch, oak, and beech. The latter four were regarded as the best firewood for heat and staying power. We generally worked it up into pieces 10-12 feet long and left it in big piles beside the woods roads. Then as time permitted we would load these poles onto the logging sleds and haul them up to the house and put in long piles in the front yard. At the end of the Winter we might have 25-30 cords assembled.

The firewood job was not finished until we had the wood in the woodshed in proper size for use. So, the next step, which started in March as the snow began to soften up, was to get out the buzz-saw, which was powered by a six-horsepower gas engine, and cut the wood into shorter pieces, about 12-14 inches for the cookstove and around 30 inches for the "furnace" (the latter was a brick affair in the dining room). Dad usually operated the saw table which was hinged to permit tipping it and the long sticks into the saw. Another man or boy was required to feed the long sticks from the pile into the saw table. My job was usually to "take away," which meant I stood by the end of the saw table, held on to the end of the sticks as they were cut, and then threw them behind me out of the way. This became tiresome after an hour or two, and I was always getting sawdust in my eyes. But we kept at it hour after hour and day after day until the whole pile was done. We would shut down every hour or two to move the machine along as the pile was gradually reduced. Earlier, but not much before my time, all this was done by hand with bucksaws, which must have been an endless job.

The next step in the firewood operation was to split the large chunks into smaller pieces suitable for burning, particularly for the cook stove. This was a big job, taking many man and boy hours. But finally it would be finished, probably sometime in April, and then would come the task of moving the pieces into the woodshed, using a wheelbarrow and manpower. With luck this would be completed in early May. It was a good job for the hired man as he was resting from shoveling manure into the spreader, while Dad was out spreading the manure on the fields. Dad told me once that this was a good use of labor.

Woods work was part of our life, but it was mainly a harvesting operation. We did not feel it necessary to plant trees or to give them much management as they grew. Actually natural reproduction was generally quite good, although we perhaps could have exerted more control over the type of stand that developed. And we probably would have speeded up growth rates by pruning and thinning, at least in the pine stands as Phil did later. Fields not farmed in the area would revert back to forest quite rapidly, as evidenced by the stands of trees in the Seven-Acre Field and the 12-Acre Field. Both of these were hayfields in my time, but were left uncut to grow trees starting around 1925.

(top) Photo 58. Farm woodlot, 1930.
(middle) Photo 59. Bolts stacked in farm woodlot, 1930.
(bottom) Photo 60. Shirl chopping wood in the yard, 1919. Note Main Barn and Machine Shed (New Shed) in background.

Photo 61. Shirl chopping more wood in the yard, 1919. Machine Shed (New Shed) in background.

BUTCHERING
(8/10/51)

We always kept a brood sow and she would have a litter of pigs every Spring. Two of these we kept and the rest were sold when about five weeks old. The two we kept were fed during the Summer and Fall, and would be nice fat porkers by December. Then about Christmas time Dad would start making preparations for butchering. He would sharpen up the butcher knives, get out the wooden scalding tub, the "blocks" for hoisting the carcasses, and other necessary items.

Finally the day arrived and we kids were told to stay in the house until the men had slaughtered the two hogs out in the barnyard. Even then we could sometimes hear the poor animals squealing, but this was soon over and we could watch the rest which was a fascinating operation. The carcasses would be brought into the Carriage House, and the first step was to get the bristles off. This was done by dipping the hogs into hot water which loosened the bristles so that they could be scraped off easily with an old metal candlestick or something of that nature. Then the hogs would be attached to the blocks by their hind feet and pulled up to a convenient height for removing the intestines and other organs. This was done by cutting a long opening in the belly and pulling everything

out. The liver and bladder would be saved, the liver for early frying, the bladder to be blown up and kicked around like a football.

After the "insides" were removed, the carcasses were washed down and left to cool for several hours. Then they were taken down and cut into suitable pieces. The hams and sausage meat were set aside to be taken to town for curing or grinding at the local meat market. The fat pork was salted down in the cellar, and the head meat and feet were made into "hogshead cheese." Most of the rest was carried up into the shed chamber and placed in a special closet there where it would freeze and keep all Winter.

I remember once Dad was furious with me and for good reason. It was late in the afternoon on butchering day and the pigs were cool enough to cut up. Dad asked me to hold onto the rope and let the pigs down slowly while he guided them to the proper place on the cutting table below. The first one went alright, but the second, which was larger, got away from me and fell out of control. It hit Dad on the shoulder and almost knocked him down, then crashed onto the table and tipped it over so that both nice clean pigs were lying on the dirty floor. I wanted to run and hide, but screwed up my courage to stay. Dad cussed a little but we soon had the pigs up in the air and washed off again, after which we let them down slow and easy.

WINTER SPORTS
(8/17/51)

The first event of the season was usually skating, and we sometimes could skate on Thanksgiving day. Then would come sliding, skiing, and snowshoeing as the snow came and got deeper. I suppose that sliding was our biggest Winter sport, since it could be done all Winter and required less skill than skating or skiing. The folks bought me a flexible flier type sled when I was around 10. It was a long, low one with round steel runners, and it was wonderful on a good hard surface, but not as good as flat runners on soft snow or crust. Dad also made us a set of "Bobs" which was a standard item then, consisting of two small sleds connected by a board 10-15 feet long. The front sled could be steered by a wheel or lever.

All the kids around had sleds of one kind or another, and we used to slide every spare minute when the weather permitted. The best sliding was generally in the road after the snow had been packed down well by the horses and sleighs. No autos were operated on the back roads during Winter in those days. Sometimes we would organize a neighborhood sliding party on a moonlit evening, usually on the Aqueduct Hill (just east of the house) or on the Schoolhouse Hill (farther down the road). The old folks would often join us kids on the evening parties, although as we got older we didn't encourage this since it cramped our style a little in the mild courting that was always possible.

Once or twice every Winter we had "crust" sledding. This would result from a rain or thaw followed by freezing weather. Then all the fields would be covered with a hard, smooth icy surface and sledding territory was unlimited. A favorite spot for crust sledding was the old "12 acre" field on the southwest side of our farm next to the Cummings place. The field had a nice long slope down into the Cummings field. Usually the snow

was deep enough so we could slide right over the stone wall at the boundary, and many a Sunday afternoon we kids spent happily sliding down that slope and walking back. Mid Cummings was usually there, and sometimes a few others from farther away. Our folks never approved of sliding on Sundays, but generally did nothing to prevent it if we got far enough from the house so they couldn't see or hear us. I guess they figured that peace around the house was more than enough to offset our sin in breaking the Sabbath, particularly if they weren't sure what we were doing.

I remember once on a good crust Phil, Mid Cummings, and I took the bobs and started down across the steep field below the upper end of the Big Field. We knew there was a barbed wire fence near the foot of the hill, but we thought we could stop before reaching it. The crust was very smooth and icy, however, and we soon were moving at terrific speed, and with that wire fence coming right at us. We dragged our feet, but that had no effect on the icy crust. Finally, with disaster close, we turned sideways and tipped the bobs over, but still we kept sliding, boys and bobs in a tangle, toward the fence. Finally we hit it, but luckily we were all horizontal and went through the fence with nothing more serious than a few scratches plus some badly torn clothes and a slightly damaged bobs. My best work pants were nearly ruined, but the folks were so glad to see us not seriously hurt that they never scolded us much about the property damage. Other kids were badly hurt in similar accidents, however, and some of them had obvious scars for life.

Skating was good sport, but not very dependable since the ice was usually covered with too much snow. Only once in a while could we skate, either before the snow came, or during a thaw in the Winter, followed by a freeze. But we had enough ice to learn to skate and to practice some every year. Learning to skate was a long, hard task for me. Dad was a good skater and expected me to learn quickly. But I could not, and after many trials and much effort was still very awkward. For some reason I could not learn to stroke with both feet, but could only push with one while the other did nothing but hold me up. This was a terrible way to skate, and I'm sure that Dad was mortified to see his son so backward. But he still took me along, and I kept trying and finally one day it came to me. I could use both feet, and soon was flashing around the ice in a manner that pleased both Dad and myself. From then on I skated whenever it was possible, and I even learned to cut circles backward.

The other major Winter sport was skiing, and this we could do most any time. My first skis were an old pair I found up in the scaffold in the harness shed. Dad had made them by hand when he was a boy, but hadn't used them for years. They were not too bad, but had nothing to hold your feet except a narrow leather band which slipped over the instep of your shoe. Consequently, they were always getting away and arriving ahead of the boy. But we got along fairly well with such equipment and spent many a Sunday afternoon walking up and skiing down the hills of the neighborhood. We even tried a little jumping, but never had the courage to go too far with that.

Finally, we had lots of fun in the Winter just riding a sleigh pulled by a driving horse. Mostly this was going to and from school, but sometimes we would hitch up and tear around just for the fun of it. It was good sport on a clear cold moonlit night to go sleigh riding on the country roads with the bells jingling. There were no autos to bother us on

those roads in the Winter. We would ride along singing "Jingle Bells," "Seeing Nellie Home," and other songs, some not so appropriate, but all cheerful and gay. On such cold nights the horse would feel good and would want to go fast just to keep warm. Sometimes we had trouble keeping warm, but always had plenty of clothing plus the heavy lap robe, and often a hot soapstone.

Photo 62. Aunt Mary in sleigh, ca. 1900. This is the same sleigh that is now stored in the Carriage House loft at the farm.

BREAKING THE ROAD
(10/2/51, 1/2/76)

Every Winter one of our jobs was "breaking the road." This meant opening up the roads for travel after a snow storm or sometimes just after a wind blow that piled snow up in the road. Each neighborhood was more or less responsible for its own roads, although the town paid for the work at moderate rates. This was done by a combination of hand shoveling in the drifted sections, plus a horse-drawn rig for the rest. The hand shoveling and use of horses that we provided were paid for by the town at the rate of about 25 cents per hour for men (and boys), and about 50 cents per hour for a team of horses. Each worker was on the honor system to report his and his boys' hours correctly. I expect that this system was not much different from that in use earlier, at least back to Civil War days.

If the snowfall was not too heavy, and if the drifts were not too deep, the job could be done mostly by the horses. We would hitch two or sometimes four horses to the logging

sleds and fasten a 4 × 4 about 7 feet long in front of the rear sled. This would sort of pack the snow and push some of it out of the way so that the result was a fairly good road for sleds and sleighs. We never used the car in the Winter, of course, until late in the 1920s. Sometimes, and in some spots, however, the drifts would by 4, 6, and even 8 feet deep, and then it was a question of shoveling. All the men of the community, and most of the boys, would go to work with shovels and slowly dig out a roadway perhaps 7 feet wide. This was hard, slow work, and sometimes a crew of us would spend nearly a whole day on that stretch in front of the house running down to Aqueduct Hill, probably about 500 yards. Another bad place was at "The Corners" by the cemetery. Fortunately, most of the road had woods on both sides which prevented much drifting.

I remember that during several Winters the road at "The Corner" was entirely abandoned to the snow, and we used a woods road which did not drift so much. This road was developed for the logging teams since it avoided the Schoolhouse Hill. It left the regular road just west of the schoolhouse and cut through the woods and fields until it hit the main road by the reservoir near the old Jim Millet place. This woods road was protected from the wind and was much more snug and comfortable than the open main road. The only trouble was the constant danger of meeting and trying to pass a big load of logs or pulp wood. The road was only wide enough for one team, and the turnabouts were few. Sometimes we could have to back up for quite a distance, and I recall that once we broke a sleigh shaft in the process. It was standard practice, of course, to stop at each turnabout and listen for bells approaching. But sometimes we forgot this, or maybe the other fellow was listening at exactly the same moment as we were.

Looking back at it, I can't see how we kept so happy in the Winter with the constant threat of blocked roads and the more or less continuous job of keeping them open. Actually, I don't recall even being snowbound for more than 2-3 days at any one time, and in most Winters I believe we could count on having roads open for sleighs and sleds at least 90% of the time.

A big change came about 1926-27 with the policy of keeping the Winter roads open for automobile traffic. At that time most of the country roads began to be plowed by a tractor with a snow plow on the front which pushed the snow out of the roads, leaving a good surface for autos. Snow fence to control drifting was also introduced, probably in the late 1920s, along with the use of salt to melt the snow on the roadway. Along with this came the practice of driving cars all Winter, even in the rural areas. This meant the end of breaking roads with the horses and it also eliminated most of the hand shoveling. But at the same time it removed some of the glamour of the Winter time. Car travel tended to ruin the roads for sleighing or sliding, and for several years this was quite an issue between the reckless fools with autos and the diehards who stuck with horses. Finally, the horses lost out, of course. I wouldn't want to go back to the horse and buggy days, but on a moonlit night in the snow country a car can never quite take the place of a horse and sleigh. I can still hear the bells jingling and the kids singing.

HUNTING, FISHING, AND TRAPPING
(10/10/51)

Hunting, fishing, and trapping were a part of life on the farm. Every Fall, as soon as "the law went off," we would go "gunning" (as most of the older folks called it). This usually meant hunting for partridge (ruffed grouse) or deer, but could also mean squirrels, either red or gray. We never shot the chipmunks because they were so cute. A boy was considered a hunter when he became 10 or 11, and I started at about that age, using an old single-shot 22 rifle. Mid Cummings had a similar gun, and we often hunted together.

Hunting was good sport in the crisp days of October. We would usually go on Saturday afternoon, since Dad felt we kids should work Saturday mornings, even in hunting season. But after dinner at noon we would get on our jackets and red caps and start out. Our favorite spot was the Knight's place beyond the old Town Farm. This was an abandoned farm with lots of apple trees and openings in the woods. We could always find squirrels there and good eating apples on the old trees. Furthermore, the view was nice with the Oxford Valley and hills spread out below and with Lake Thompson right in the center. We kids never thought much about the view, but I think it meant something to us nevertheless. And the old cellar holes and the partly fallen buildings were interesting too. In fact, when we first started hunting there, a small barn in fairly good repair was still standing. We sometimes took shelter in it, and I remember once how Dad and I spent an hour or more in the basement during a heavy rain. We made good use of the time by doing some practice shooting at a target.

Uncle John had the reputation of being just about the best bird hunter in the neighborhood. He kept his hunting secrets to himself and would never take us kids along. He did bring back quite a few "pattridges," as we called them, and many a time I watched him dress them in the evening. They were usually about the size of a bantam chicken, but more on the plump side, and they were very good eating. Once Uncle John got mixed up with a skunk and came back smelling very bad. Mother wouldn't even let him in the house, but insisted that he leave his clothes out in the carriage shed. This he did, and I doubt that they were ever wearable again.

The big game, of course, that everyone hoped to get, but seldom did, was a deer. They were quite plentiful, but were hard to find in hunting season. All Summer long we would see them often in bunches of two or three, but come October they became elusive. I remember once, however, when I was about 10, that three nice deer appeared in the Big Field during open season. Dad saw them and immediately called Charles Swett on the phone. Charles grabbed his gun and two or three of his boys and started for a spot near Knight's turn where deer were often know to "cross." Meantime, Dad got his old Spanish mauser out, and with me in tow started to sneak up on the deer. I had my little 22, but it was mostly for appearance, and I was too excited anyway. We worked our way along behind trees and stone fences, crawling part of the way and finally were nearly close enough for Dad to take a shot. Then something frightened the deer—possibly they heard us or it may have been another hunter. Anyway, up went their tails and, light as feathers,

they bounced gracefully out of sight into the woods. Dad said "cripes," or something similar, and we started out in the rather vain hope of catching them. Then all of a sudden the three deer came out of the woods again, this time on the dead run. Something in the woods had really scared them, and they headed across the field at full speed, perhaps 300 yards away. Dad knew this was our last chance, so he raised the mauser and fired several times. I even popped away with my 22. But hitting a deer running at full speed 300 yards away is not easy, and all we did was increase their speed. They disappeared into the other woods in no time, and Dad said "cripes" again. Sometime later Charles and his boys came dragging up the road without having seen hide or hair of the game. When Charles had heard the story he said something a little stronger than "cripes," and then for an hour or so he told us some tall tales about the many deer he had shot in the past, always on the dead run at 400 yards or more.

Skunk hunting by moonlight was another form of hunting, but somehow I never cared much for it. This took place on the full of the moon in October, usually on and around the fields where sweet corn had been harvested earlier that season. Skunks and sometimes coons could often be found eating off the nubbins and refuse from the corn. But it was usually cold when the moon was clear and bright, and it always seemed like a slow, cold business to me. I preferred daylight hunting and I think most everybody else did too, except for a few fanatics who would prowl around all night for the sake of one shot at a skunk or coon.

Most of our hunting was done in the Fall, but fishing could go on all Summer and even in the Winter. My first experience with fishing was early, probably when I was about 9. Mid Cummings, Phil, and I had gone for a walk down by Alvin Lovejoy's place, and had started playing in the brook below the house. We always called it Alvin's Brook at that point, although farther upstream it was called the Icepond Brook or Town Farm Brook. We were trying to float around on a crude raft when we noticed some little fish about 2-3 inches long darting about in the water. They were only minnows, as we learned later, but we thought they were wonderful and became very excited. We tried to catch them in our hands, but had no luck. Then we started to explore downstream and completely forgot about time as we found a never ending series of pools with lots of fish. Finally it became dusky and we realized all of a sudden that we were hungry and it was supper time. So we hustled back upstream and out to the road. Just about that time we hear a horse and buggy rattling down the hill, and lo and behold it was Mother coming after us. She was furious, of course, but also relieved at finding us safe, even if a little wet and awfully hungry. So she bundled us into the buggy and hauled us home in no time, scolding us all the way, but smiling a little at our youthful excitement about the fish. Dad was tolerant of the whole thing, and suggested that next time we take some fishing equipment and that maybe he would even go with us, which he did.

From then on brook fishing was a favorite sport in the Spring and Summer. All we needed for equipment was a few hooks and a line. We would cut a pole beside the road, dig angle worms for bait, and be all set. We used to fish most often in Alvin's Brook, and several times followed it all the way down to the "Fore Street" Valley. Less often we would fish in the Schoolhouse Brook, which crosses the road just west of the old red

schoolhouse about a mile east of home. And once in a while we would go over to Thayer Brook on the abandoned East Oxford Road beyond the old Town Farm. We never caught any large number of trout and hardly ever got one more than 7-8 inches long, but it was lots of fun when the mosquitoes and flies weren't too bad.

The best string of trout I ever caught was one June evening all by myself. After supper I went down to the ice pond for a little fishing during twilight. Almost at once I caught a beautiful 8-inch trout, and soon another. In about 45 minutes I had about 8-10 nice ones and carried them back home after dark, happy as a clam at high tide. I was sure proud of myself, and the folks were really impressed. Even Dad had to admit that not since 1890, or thereabouts, when he was a boy had such a fine bunch of trout been brought into the house. I could never do it again, not even when fishing in the northern Maine woods in later years.

In the Winter ice fishing was always a possibility, but like skunk hunting it never appealed to me. It meant too much waiting around in the cold without any activity except on the rare occasions when the ice was free of snow and we could skate as well as fish. The favorite ice fishing spot in the area was North Pond, a small lake near Norway village. We went there once or twice and caught a few pickerel, but I still think that Winter in Maine is the time for skiing, sliding, and skating rather than fishing. Perhaps it would be more fun with a shelter house and stove such as they use in some places.

Finally, trapping was a sport of some importance and also a source of a little income. Every Summer around August 15 we would set steel traps around the edges of the corn field to catch the skunks, coons, and foxes that were damaging the sweet corn. This was mostly to prevent the damage to the crops, since the furs were not prime so early in the season, and not worth much. But we caught numerous animals and usually skinned them for what they would bring. We kids had the job of visiting the traps every morning. It was quite a thrill for us to sneak up to a trap location and then find a poor skunk or coon in the trap. When caught they always moved around in a circle as wide as the trap chain would permit, and of course they gradually knocked down all the corn stalks in the circle and made a path in the soil. The skunks we usually shot with the old 22 rifle. The results were always odiferous, but we generally kept far enough away to avoid anything more than a mild dose. The coons we often took home alive and tried to make pets out of them. They were pretty, but they were also wild, and we never did really make a pet out of one. They usually escaped sooner or later by chewing a hole in the side of the pen or building where we had put them.

I remember that once we caught a baby coon and thought we really had a pet at last. But a few days later we caught a big female coon who apparently was the baby's mother. At least she nursed it and took good care of it. Furthermore, she taught the baby that people were not to be trusted, and finally one night she gnawed out of the pen and took the baby with her back to the wilds. Probably just as well.

Trapping in the late Fall and Winter was more difficult but was better in a way since the furs were much more valuable then. I had trap lines out for two or three Winters during World War I and caught a few foxes that brought $15-$20 each. But it was hard to find the time to tend the traps since I had to do it after chores and before leaving for

Photo 63. Setting traps in the corn field, 1920. Left to right: Phil, Shirl, Mert, Bun.

school at around 7:30 AM. I finally gave up the Winter trapping in favor of catching the more numerous but less valuable furs in the corn fields of August and September.

In connection with trapping, we learned at an early age of the fur catalogs put out by the different dealers, most of whom seemed to be in St. Louis. I still recall such names as Funsten and Taylor who had me on their mailing lists for years and wrote me a few times in later years to inquire why I hadn't sent them any furs recently. These catalogs gave their buying prices for different grades and kinds, and also listed equipment they had for sale. They also included information on how to trap and we used to study that diligently, much more than our school books I think. I remember once a new catalog arrived in the noon mail on a day when we were picking over beans. I, of course, wanted to spend most of the afternoon studying the fascinating pages on how to trap and what prices to expect. But Dad insisted that this could be done later and that picking over beans should have my immediate and undivided attention. For a while I was as mad as a 12 year old boy can get at his Dad—but I soon got over it.

The fur companies also sold "scent," which was a concoction to put on or near the traps and was supposed to be irresistible to all fur-bearing animals. Each company had its own secret formula, I suppose, but after studying all the ads carefully, I ordered a bottle from Funsten for about $1.00. In due time it arrived and it smelled exactly like the paregoric that Mother sometimes used for treating our aching teeth. I tried it out with great expectations—and caught nothing more that season. What a let down!

One Winter Mid Cummings and I decided to become partners in trapping. We had lots of fun planning the details and dividing our prospective profits—which somehow were supposed to be about 10 times what we could make separately. Our parents had some

misgivings about the whole thing—particularly as to how we would divide the profits in case one of us happened to catch a silver fox or a mutation mink. Fortunately that issue never arose. In fact, I don't think we caught a single animal that season after forming the partnership. And, of course, by next season it was completely forgotten.

Another way of capturing fur-bearing animals was to "dig them out." The way this was supposed to work, you found the underground den of skunks or foxes and then shoveled through the soil until you exposed the animals, which were presumably sleeping there. The only time we ever tried this it was a dismal failure. I located a hole in the ground that somehow I felt sure contained foxes. So with Mid Cummings and Phil to help we set out one Saturday morning in January to dig out the foxes. The ground was frozen, of course, but not too deeply since the snow had protected it. We huffed and puffed and dug furiously for about an hour. We moved a lot of dirt and made a good-sized hole in the ground—but never did come to the end of the tunnel or to any animals. We finally decided that the den was vacant and that any further digging would be a waste of time and equipment. We never tried that again. Neither did we ever try the trick of "smoking them out" which, according to the catalogs, was a very fine method.

Looking back at it, I suspect that we could have done much better at trapping than we did. What we needed, I'm sure, was a little expert help from someone of experience. But it was good clean fun—except for the time I got caught in a big fox trap—and I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

HAYING
(1/30/52)

The biggest event of the Summer on the farm was haying. It started on July 5 (unless that was Sunday) and, if we were lucky, ended by Sept. 1, except for a little second-cutting clover. When I was a kid we were still doing it the hard way, although Dad always claimed, and no doubt truthfully, that it was much harder in his boyhood.

Anyway, the system as I knew it was to cut the grass with a horse-drawn mowing machine having a five- or six-foot cut. This was a pretty good machine and would cut a lot of territory in half a day. Then after the hay had dried for several hours, generally sometime the next day if the weather was good, it would be raked with a horse-drawn dump rake and left in windrows. The rake was about 10 feet wide and was drawn by a horse with one person to drive and to handle the dumper and other controls. This was one of my first jobs in haying and I rather enjoyed it. In fact, by the time I was 11 or so I was considered a good raker, and took much pride in making straight windrows and cleaning up the field nicely.

As soon as the raking was finished, or even before, the job of loading and hauling started. We never had a mechanical hay loader, but always pitched it on by hand. This was a hard job which Dad generally did himself. The hay wagon drawn by two horses and with a man on the rack would stop along side the windrow and the pitcher-on, who was the man most likely to have sun stroke, would start pitching. The man on the wagon would "lay the load," which consisted of building each forkful into a load that would

stay on until it reached the barn and, even more important to some people, would look square and trim in the process. Uncle John always laid the load when he was working for Dad, and usually did quite well. Once in a while, however, he would get to dreaming about his birds' eggs or something and would end up with a lop-sided load that looked bad and would just barely make the barn. Once or twice it didn't, and then it all had to be pitched on again. What a job!

Once the load of hay was in the barn it had to be unloaded. This was done with the "horse fork," a long metal grapple hung on ropes in such a manner that it, with a forkful of hay, could be pulled up to the top of the barn and then rolled along a track until it reached the proper spot in the mow. Dad was very proud of the horse fork. He had installed it himself a few years before my day, probably about 1905. Prior to that time the unloading was done by hand, and what a job it must have been to get all that hay off the load and back into the mows.

In recent years I've often wondered just how Dad went about installing the hay fork and the track it ran on. When the old barn was torn down in 1950-51 the track came down too, of course, and I had a chance to look it over more closely than ever before. It was a wooden track four inches square made of two 2 × 4's fastened together and then suspended by 1/2 inch bolts from strong horizontal boards nailed to the rafters near the peak of the barn. It must have been a real task to get the track up there with all measurement right. It probably was put up in sections, but must have been a job, and it never occurred to me to ask Dad just how he did it.

I remember once I helped Dad install a new rope for the horse fork. I was probably about 10 then, and not as attentive as I should have been. My job was to act as a sort of ground man while Dad got up in the top of the barn and fed the rope through the various pulleys to the fork. It was a hard, nerve-wracking job for him, I'm sure, up there in the top of the barn in June, with practically no hay in the mow in case of a fall. Finally he had it all fixed, or thought he had—but alas and alack, when we pulled the rope up it had a knot in it which, of course, would not go through the pulleys, and which was all my fault. Dad was quite provoked and I didn't blame him, even then. But he didn't make as much fuss about it as I would have in his position, for having to do the job again.

My job in unloading the hay was to lead or ride the horse that pulled the hay off the load and up into the mow. After the load was in the barn, one horse would be unhitched from the wagon and hitched to the whiffle-tree at the end of the hay rope. Then after Dad had pulled the fork down and set it into the hay, he would shout "Go ahead," and the horse and I would start out across the field back of the barn. The first few feet took up the slack in the rope and then came the hard part of lifting the hay from the load to the top of the barn. The horse really had to pull then, and the rope would sing and the pulleys would squeal. But as soon as the fork locked into the catch at the track, the rest was easy and consisted only of pulling the fork and contents along the track to the spot that Dad chose to dump it. Then he would pull the dump rope and holler "whoa" at the top of his voice for me to hear some 60-90 feet out in the field. This was my signal to stop the horse and return for another go, and so on until the load was all in the mow, usually 6-8 forkfuls.

Photo 64. Oscar on hay rake, ca. 1900.

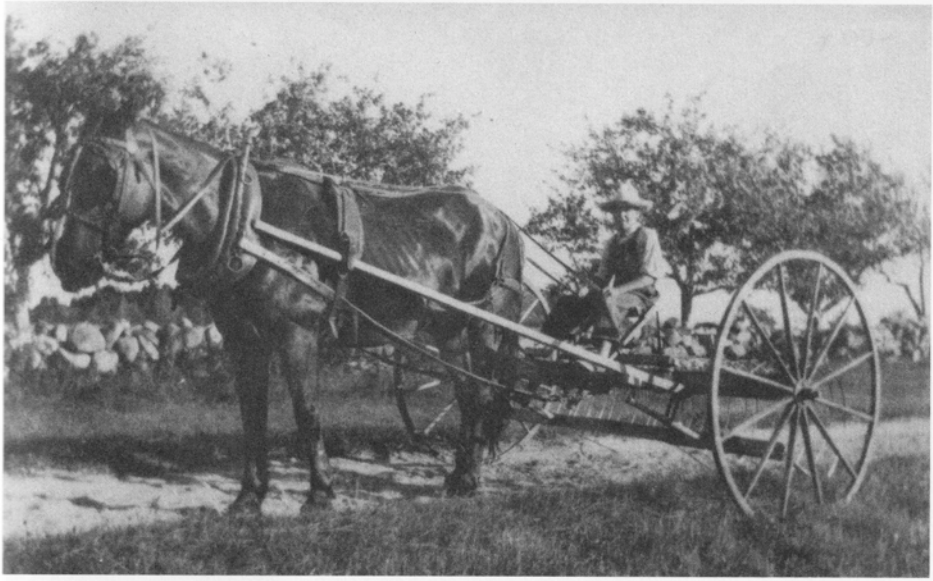


Photo 65. Mert on hay rake, 1920.

Photo 66. Kids at side of loaded hay wagon, 1919. Bottom to top: Mert, Bun, Phil, Shirl, Oscar.

Photo 67. Loaded hay wagon in South Field, 1919. Mert on top.

Photo 68. Loaded hay wagon, 1920. Mert on top, Bun on ground at left.

Photo 69. Loaded hay wagon, 1923. Left to right: Oscar Leighton (neighbor), Phil (on horse), Mert (on top).

During the unloading process someone had to be up in the mow, of course, to spread the hay out after it had dropped in a bunch off the fork. This was usually the hired man's job, and a hot tiring task it was. When Uncle John was doing it, he could never keep up, which made Dad very disgusted. But poor Uncle John was more interested in his birds' eggs and his piccolo. Farming to him was necessary, but unpleasant, and he never had his heart in it. Bernice and Phil loved unloading, however, because they, along with Mid Cummings, could play around in the mow or on the scaffolds and even chase the hay fork

along the track as it came and went. They could do this by running on a series of planks strung across the big collar beams in the barn. These were some 30 feet above the floor, and playing on them was a little risky until the barn was partly filled with hay. But play they did, and how I envied them as I jockeyed the poor old horse back and forth.

Some years when the hay crop was extra good we would have to put some of it in the old "grain barn" (a smaller barn which was torn down between 1941 and 1945). This was done entirely by hand, but was not so bad since the barn was quite short and the hay had to be moved only a moderate distance from the load. We kids always liked the grain barn because it was old and mysterious with lots of nooks and hiding places. It also had a head scaffold fully 30 feet up above the barn floor, and which was very hard to get to except when the barn was full of hay or straw. This was strictly "out of bounds" for children, but sometimes we snuck up there and felt very reckless among the dust and the various items of gear and equipment saved and stored there by earlier generations.

Yes, haying was a busy time and it was hard work in those days. But it had its compensations. Even as a kid I used to get a lot of satisfaction in smelling the new-mown grass or looking over a clean-cut field from which the hay had just been removed. And appetites were always good after working in the hay field. Furthermore, it was a good way to get to know your neighbors. We always swapped work in haying, particularly after Dad died in 1922. One year soon after that, probably 1924, we worked out a deal with Oscar Leighton, a neighbor who lived at "the corner" about a mile away, to hay our two farms jointly. This was a silly business because each farm had enough hay to keep three men busy for the normal haying season. But we started out, he with two small horses and the usual equipment for his contribution, and Phil and I with one horse and lots of equipment for ours. We hayed furiously all through July and August and still weren't finished. The hay in the fields was getting too ripe and all the neighbors were done—and snickering at us, no doubt. We finished up sometime in September, about in time to start school. What a Summer!

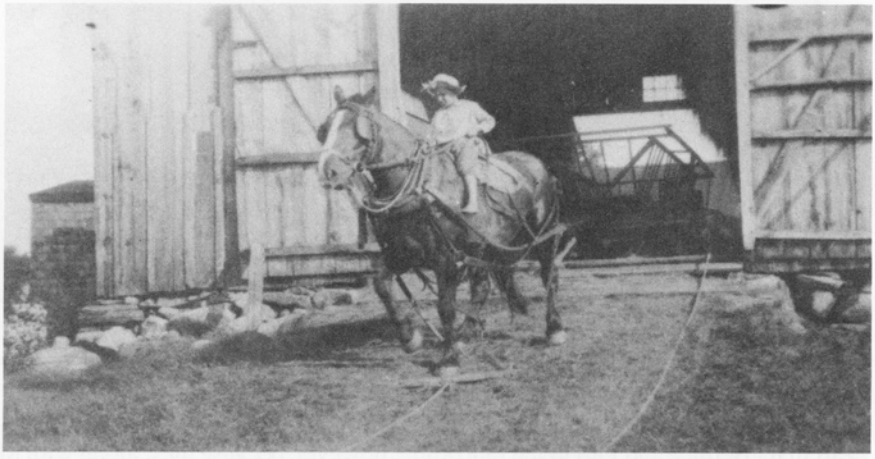


Photo 70. Phil unloading hay in the Grain Barn, 1919.

Photo 71. Haying new style, 1933. Shirl (in truck), Will Thomas (on cutter).

THE HARVEST SEASON
(5/29/52)

As soon as haying was done, or perhaps sooner, would come time to harvest the other crops—mainly oats, sweet corn, potatoes, and apples. We always had 5-6 acres of oats which were generally mature by early September. This was the only grain crop we grew and it furnished but a small part of the grain required by the cows, horses, and hens. Furthermore, it was a very expensive crop, in terms of labor, to grow and harvest the way we handled it. Nevertheless, it was one of our prides and joys, and the possibility of farming without growing oats probably never occurred to us.

In harvesting oats we used about the same methods as for hay. That is, they were cut with the mowing machine, raked with the dump rake, pitched into the hayrack, and hauled into the grain barn for storage and eventual threshing. About the only difference from haying was the fact that in the mowing operation it was necessary for someone to walk along behind the mower and move part of the cut oats over so that the machine would not damage them on the next trip. This often fell to my lot, and it became rather tiresome after a few trips around the field. It meant working fast and constantly to keep up, and such work is not play to a boy of 10-12. Sometimes the hired man would help too, and then it was not so bad.

Some of our neighbors cut oats with a binder and threshed them in the field, which was a much better way to do it. But Dad had an agreement to furnish straw to the County Fair people, so he felt it necessary to thresh in the barn to save the straw, which would be delivered the following Summer.

Threshing was quite an occasion and generally took place in November after the apples were picked. Dad had no thresher, so had to arrange for a neighbor to bring one. This required some dickering as to date and rate of pay, but was always done satisfactorily. The "threshing machine" would arrive in due time and the owner, with help from us, would set up on the grain barn floor, usually with the gas engine, which furnished the power, outside the barn. Then, on the appointed day, several other neighbors would arrive, the engine was started, and we began. My job was usually to help take care of the straw which dropped in a never-ending stream from the tail of the thresher. This was hard, dusty, monotonous work and I never liked it, particularly toward the end of the day when there was usually no more space to put the straw. I've often wondered why the machine we used couldn't have had the well-known long tail pipe and blower to avoid all the hand work in moving the straw. Probably such a machine was more expensive and required more power.

Threshing day was a real event for the women too, since it meant preparing a big dinner for the crew to eat at noon. Mother and Grandmother, plus the hired girl if we had one at the time, worked very hard to fix something special as well as sufficient volume of food for five or six extra men. We always had meat and potatoes, of course, along with some vegetables, hot biscuits, coffee, and pie. I remember that once Mother served rabbit for the meat course, and everyone seemed to like it.

Another harvest job was picking the sweet corn for the cannery, or the "cornshop" as we called it. This was a rush job in early September, which had to wait until the corn was ready but had to be finished before frost. With normal weather and some extra day help we could generally get the 4-6 acres harvested on time. But if bad weather in July or August delayed growth, or if it rained excessively during the picking season, then we were in trouble, and the entire life of the family revolved around the question of getting the corn picked before the frost got it. This was a real problem, since the sweet corn crop meant anywhere from $500 to $1000—a sizable share of the farm income in those days. I remember a few times when we picked corn all day in a driving rain—a very nasty job. In fact, the way we did it was bad enough even in perfect weather. Our method, which probably was the same one used 25-50 years earlier, was to pick in bushel baskets, dumping them when full into the farm wagon if it were available, or on the ground otherwise, to be loaded into the wagon later. Each man or boy would have a basket and would walk between two rows, picking both of them. This was hard work, and I've often wondered since why we couldn't have had some of the labor-saving devices that were used in other areas, even in those days.

As soon as the sweet corn was picked, or even before, came the job of filling the silo with the corn stalks and with cobs and husks from the cannery. The hope on this also was to finish before frost, but we almost never did. Dad had built a silo in the cow barn sometime around 1909 ("ought nine," as he called it). He bought a second-hand chopper and carrier for reducing the stalks to small pieces and getting them into the silo. This was a tricky outfit and required several hours and much ingenuity to set up. It was powered by the same six horsepower gas engine that we used for threshing and sawing wood, and worked fairly well once the bugs were out. But the bugs were numerous, and

well I remember how several "balance wheels" were broken until we learned the secret of attaching one properly.

My job in silo filling generally was in the silo, tramping the silage and keeping it level with a fork. Sometimes Mid Cummings would help me just for fun. Dad seemed to feel that this was a boy's job and that the men were needed more in handling the corn stalks in the field and at the chopper or "cutter," as we called it. Maybe he was right, but I often felt that I was working much harder than a boy my age should. However, the chopped corn stalks were clean and not dusty, and they had a pleasant smell. It was a much nicer job than handling straw from the tail of a threshing machine.

Dad thought it was necessary to add water to the silage to make it keep. So every year he would run a temporary line or pipe from the well through the barnyard to the silo, and would try to have a small stream running into the silo all the time as it was being filled. This was a lot of trouble and probably was totally unnecessary. But it did provide the ingredients for a few water fights in the silo when Mid or some other boy was helping me.

Potato harvest was also in September, but it was a minor job since we never raised more than 1/2 acre—just enough for ourselves, plus a few to sell if the yield was good. But it was all hand work, both the digging and the picking up. Dad and the hired man generally dug them, using a special potato fork or digger, a sort of hoe with tines. Then we kids would pick them up in half bushel baskets and dump them into feed sacks—about a bushel to a sack. Dad usually paid us for this. I don't recall the exact rate of pay, but it was something like 2 cents per bushel, enough to give us a little spending money, but hardly enough to lead us into dissipation.

Once the potatoes were dug and stored in the cellar, the remaining harvest job was picking the apples. This was our October job, and generally took most of the month since we usually had 200 bushels or more. We kids were in school then, of course, but could help on Saturdays and holidays. Picking apples was a pleasant job on a nice crisp October day—probably the nicest harvest job we had. It was also a little dangerous, since it meant climbing into the tops of the trees which were often 30 feet high. And sometimes a ladder would slip and dump the picker. But we never had a serious accident, and as far as we kids were concerned the slight danger was only thrilling.

Our apple trees were mostly in scattered blocks and strung along fences. This was not an efficient system, but it was what we had, and probably it never occurred to any of us that it might have been cheaper not to pick some of the more remote trees. Dad seemed to consider it sinful to leave any apples on a tree, and was very careful to get every one, no matter how hard to reach. This meant that at the end of the season we would spend several days picking scattered trees in the pasture and even in the woods. I well remember 4 or 5 big old Spitzenburg trees in the pine woods and how we would drag long ladders, picking poles, baskets, and bags to each of them for the sake of getting a few wormy apples. But then it kept us out of mischief, and maybe after all it was the best possible use of our time.

The apples were generally stored in the cellar of the house, and all had to be carried down and dumped in the apple cellar—the big room in the southeast corner. The apples

were fragrant and made the whole house smell good during that season. Most of our apples were Baldwins and Ben Davis, but we had a few Greenings, Kings, McIntosh, Spitzenburg, Nodheads, Snows, and other odd varieties. It was a job to keep all of them separate. But it had to be done, and was accomplished by using bins for the important varieties, boxes and barrels for the minor ones.

Sometime during the late Fall or Winter would come apple packing. This was an exciting time for us kids since it usually meant new people to talk with and lots of chances to play new games in and around the packing operation. The job was generally done in the cellar, with lamps and lanterns for light. The center of operations was the apple "tray," which was nothing more than a shallow box about 10 feet long and 3 feet wide. It had a slatted bottom to let the leaves fall through, and was mounted on barrels or boxes at a convenient height of about 36 inches. It sloped slightly to the front so that the apples would roll to that end where the sorters would stand. The sorters were two men, well experienced in apple grading, whose job it was to pick out the small, wormy, or deformed fruit and let only the good ones go into the barrels at the end of the tray. We generally made two grades—No. 1 and No. 2—with No. 2 having more tolerance as to size, color, and defects. The sorters also were supposed to pick out "facers" for use in starting each new barrel. These facers were extra nice apples and were arranged in an orderly manner, stems down, in the bottom of the barrel, which, of course, was the end that was supposed to be opened by the user and was so labeled.

The packing crew, in addition to the sorters, required two or three other men to keep the tray filled with apples, to stencil the barrel heads and do the facing, to operate the press, and to roll the filled barrels out of the way. The pressing job was a fascinating one, and it was really fun to watch a good operator. First he would place a padded board across the top of the barrel (really the bottom) which was filled to overflowing. Holding this tightly against the apples he would rock the barrel back and forth to settle the apples and get a tight pack. This would generally leave the barrel almost level full. Then he would slip the press onto the barrel, place a paper liner and a wood top on the apples, and start turning the screw device of the press to force the top down into its proper place about 1 inch below the top of the staves. This required considerable squeezing of the apples, loosening of the top hoop, some pounding with a hammer or hatchet, and a lot of action generally. Finally the top would slip into its groove and would be nailed in. Then for added security "headers," which were small wooden sticks about 3/8 inch in diameter, would be nailed around the top, also to help hold it.

I learned how to operate the press, but never became very expert at it. I generally acted as a sort of utility man at apple packing time and, when available, would try to fill in wherever needed—labeling, rolling the filled barrels out of the way, or bringing up empty ones to be filled.

Oftentimes some of the apple packers would stay overnight with us. This was always interesting to us kids since some of the men were really characters. They would tell us tall stories, teach us new games, and worry Mother and Dad half to death, no doubt. I particularly remember one packer-buyer: R. L. Cummings. Everyone called him "R. L.," and he was known far and wide. He stayed several days at our house one Fall, and

used to play "63" with us during the long evenings. He was good hearted and cheerful, and we really enjoyed him. He had what seemed to us to be a good singing voice, and would sing for hours on end in the cellar while packing apples.

After the apples were packed, they had to be hauled to South Paris to be "loaded on the cars." This was done by horse power, either on wheels or sleds as road conditions required, and was a fairly big operation since 20 barrels, or so, was a load for two horses. We generally hired a neighbor or two with their teams to help out, but even then it took 2-3 days to load a car.

At the latter end of this process, Dad would get paid for the apples, at a price which had been agreed upon, of course, before packing started. Some of the buyers preferred to pay in cash rather than by check, and I'll never forget one who took off his shoe and pulled some $300 out of it in bills. The price varied a lot from year to year, and was the topic of much conversation and much dickering during the Fall and Winter. In good years we used to get around $3 per barrel, as I recall, which meant a gross income of perhaps $500—a lot of money in those days and in that area.

With the apples picked, the harvest season was about over except, of course, for woods work. But that could be taken a little more leisurely. At least Nature's deadlines were not quite so definite and severe. So in November we could relax and do a little more hunting and maybe a little more socializing. But not too much, because Winter was soon to arrive and taxes had to be paid in December. The harvest season was a busy time on the farm, but I suspect the only years we were really unhappy was when the harvest was poor.

SOCIAL LIFE
(7/22/52)

Although we lived out in the country and, until 1916 at least, had to travel by horse-power or afoot, we did not lack for social life. We kids, of course, were continually playing with Mid Cummings, either at his place or ours. Less frequently we would play with the Swett kids who lived across the valley a little farther away than Mid.

It was in Winter that our socializing reached its peak. Then we had sliding, skating, skiing, and other Winter sports to bring people together, plus a little more leisure time perhaps than during the rest of the year. Neighborhood parties of one kind or another were frequent along with those in town at the school, church, or grange hall. All in all, Winter was a gay time except when interrupted by blizzards or by widespread sickness, such as the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919.

Well I remember one sliding party when I was about 13 which developed into a mild romance between me and a girl who was visiting at a neighbor's home. I don't recall her name, but she was cute, fascinating, and utterly adorable. We were sliding on the Schoolhouse Hill, and most of the kids in the neighborhood were there, among them the Judds, the Swetts, and us. There must have been at least 20 boys and girls, and we had a variety of sleds, including several bobs or double runners, as we called the big ones that would hold six or more people. It was a beautiful moonlit night—cold and still with the snow just right for sliding. I got acquainted with this girl soon after arriving, and we

were inseparable for the rest of the evening. We would slide downhill together and walk back up together. We even held hands a little. I considered the possibility of kissing her goodnight, but never got to it. What an evening! I never saw her again.

Another neighborhood affair which occurred most often in the Winter was the children's party arranged by the parents. It was sometimes a birthday, sometimes just a party. In any case, it included about an equal number of boys and girls, and many of the games were definitely of the boy-girl type, such as post office. Such games were not interesting to me until I was 12 or 13, when for some reason they became fascinating.

Sleighing was also an activity that had social aspects. In the Winter, with snow covering the ground, all our traveling up to 1925 or so was done on runners, either in a sleigh that would hold 2-3 people in a single seat, or in a pung which was a two-seater and generally had two sets of runners, one behind the other. Most of the time such traveling was purely business, such as going to school or taking milk to the creamery. But once in a while we would go sleighing just for the fun of it. Usually this would be a crisp moonlit night when sufficient time had passed since the last snow fall to let the roads get well packed. Under such conditions it really was good sport to go gliding around the countryside with sleigh bells jingling and youthful voices singing. Our favorite song was "Jingle Bells," but I recall others that we liked such as "Drifting back to Dreamland" and "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles."

I recall that one very cold night when I was about 15, Mid Cummings and I hitched up our driving horse in the sleigh and drove over the hills to East Oxford where a "social" was being held in the old schoolhouse. There we met some kids we already knew plus some we hadn't known before, and we had a fine time playing "seven in seven out" and the like. Then when the party was over we started back—and was it cold. A bunch of kids from South Paris village were ahead of us and their horse, apparently stimulated by the cold, started dancing on his hind legs and otherwise acting very coltish. This scared some of the girls so much that they refused to ride in that sleigh and so came back to ride with us. This suited Mid and me fine, and for the rest of the way home I held on my lap a gal named Mae Penfold. She was sweet and cuddly, and she kissed me goodnight at the end of the journey. It was a very pleasant evening and the beginning of a romance that lasted longer than some.

Rook parties were another event in the Winter season, particularly for the grown-ups, but also for the older kids. My parents and most of the neighbors considered the use of regular playing cards to be sinful—almost as bad as drinking alcoholic beverages, and slightly worse than sliding on Sunday. So, if a card game were to be played, it had to be something like Rook or Authors.

About once a month the Rook Club would meet, at a different home each time. Most of the people would travel by horsepower which meant that the first duty of the host was to provide facilities for tying up the horses and keeping them comfortable during the evening. Then would come a brief period of conversation while others were arriving and getting organized. Finally, about 8 o'clock, or so, everyone would be ready and the Rook playing would start. It was played much like progressive Bridge, with people moving from table to table as the scores indicated. The game did not require much concentration,

the penalties for losing or the rewards for winning were not high, and the opportunities for light conversation and hilarity were great. Certain people got reputations for being good players, but I suspect it was mostly good luck. Anyway, Rook provided the basis for a gay evening which was usually climaxed by refreshments served by the host family at around 11 o'clock. Then all the visitors would start for home with sleigh bells jingling and everyone would be in bed by midnight or soon thereafter.

Once I nearly broke up a party by knocking down the stove pipe at the East Oxford schoolhouse. It was another "social" and during the Winter, so a good fire was going in the big wood stove which was the only source of heat. We were playing some game like "drop the handkerchief" and while I was "it," I somehow managed to bump into the long stovepipe and knock it down. Smoke poured into the room, and there was much ado. I felt very embarrassed and awkward, and was a little afraid that some of the local boys might beat me up for being so careless. But they didn't, and the party resumed after we had dragged the smoking stove outdoors and let the room clear up a little.

This same East Oxford schoolhouse was where I met Carolyn (Daisy) Strother, a gal who fascinated me no end for a year or two. It was when I was either a Junior or Senior in highschool, very likely in 1923, that I first met her. I don't recall the exact circumstances, but probably Mid Cummings and I drove over to East Oxford with some other kids from South Paris to attend one of the weekend "socials." It was love at first sight, I guess, and soon I found myself going to see her once a week in the family car which was then a Chevrolet (we traded in the old 1916 Ford after Dad died in 1922). Mother had misgivings, of course, about me going steady at my tender age, also about my being out late with a female and with the car. I was supposed to be home not later than 11 PM, but had trouble making it. Once I was so late that it seemed best to try to sneak in without being heard. So I carefully hunted for an unlocked window and finally found one in the parlor. Slowly and easily I opened it and crept through, shut it again, and started to my room, only to meet Mother face to face. She had been watching me all the time. After that I did better.

Hanging maybaskets was also a part of our social life. In fact, it was probably the backbone of the Spring social season. The maybasket was a paper box big enough to hold about two pounds of candy and fixed up with fancy paper frills, including a train or tail perhaps two feet long. It was often homemade, but could be purchased. In any case, the important thing was not the maybasket itself but the events that went with it. On the selected evening, which was supposed to be in May but could be in April or June if necessary, the basket would be filled with candy, peanuts, popcorn and the like. Then, just about dusk we kids and generally one older person would start out for the house of a neighbor who was to be surprised. We would approach the house quietly, walking through the woods if necessary to avoid being seen or heard. When fairly close to the house, all but one of the group would find hiding places in the woods or among the outbuildings, leaving this one person to "hang" the maybasket. This consisted of creeping up to the front door, hanging the basket on the door knob, knocking on the door until the house shook, and running for cover before the folks inside came swarming out. The idea then was for the receivers to hunt for and find the givers, after which everybody joined for an hour of

so in games and eating the candy. Any boy who found a girl hiding presumably had the right to kiss her if he wanted to, and vice versa. It was a mark of some distinction to be caught last, although sometimes a person would hide so well that he couldn't be found at all, or at least not until the evening was about over—a rather hollow triumph. And once I remember that Charles Swett, who had accompanied his kids to hang a basket on us, crawled under an old machinery shed, got wedged in a tight spot, and had to shout for help. He was a sight when we finally pulled him out—all tattered and torn and covered with dust, cobwebs, and miscellaneous debris.

VISITS FROM RELATIVES
(2/3/53)

We had numerous relatives living within a short distance and did a lot of visiting back and forth with them. This was mostly on Sunday afternoons and holidays during the Summer. Three of Dad's sisters—Aunts Apphia, Dora, and Mary—all lived in South Paris with their families and they were frequent visitors. In fact, Aunt Mary, who was a widow at my earliest memory, often used to spend the Summer at the farm. Aunt Dora had married rather late in life a widower, Henry Muzzy, who had two daughters, Annie and Lizzie. Aunt Dora and Uncle Henry would frequently walk up to the farm after church on Sunday. And then, of course, the whole family of Cliffords—Uncle Wall, Aunt

Photo 72. Visiting aunts, Luella, and kids, 1920. Left to right, back row: Luella, Apphia, Dora, Mary, Annie; front row: Phil, Bun, Shirl, Mert.

Apphia, and their 7 children—would often drop in for a visit. Uncle John lived with us anyway most of the time when I was a kid, and Aunt Annie from New York always spent a month or so at the farm during the Summer. So it was not uncommon for all of the Uncles and Aunts (plus families) on Dad's side of the house to be there together on a Sunday afternoon in July or August.

Great Uncle Rob Thomas was grandmother's twin brother, and used to visit us for a few days once in a while. I never knew him very well. He always seemed good natured, friendly, and well adjusted to life on a small, marginal farm in the Maine hills. He could no doubt have told many a tale about early life in the area, but here again we lacked the foresight to ask the pertinent questions.

Mother's relatives visited us also, but less frequently and not usually at the same time as Dad's. Looking back at it, I suspect that they were regarded as slightly inferior by Dad's relatives. Maybe it was mutual for all I know. In any case, Mother's relatives were on the poorer side in terms of material things. They had to travel by horse and buggy even after autos were common, and since they lived at some distance (Buckfield and Otisfield) they did not visit us more than once or twice per Summer. We always tried to visit their homes more often after we had the Model T.

Mother's relatives consisted first of her father (Horace Rich) and stepmother (Edna) who lived in a small farm in Otisfield about three miles from Oxford Village. This was where Mother was born and raised, and until her Dad died in 1917 we used to go there quite often on Sunday. It was a horse and buggy trip in those days, but we took a short-cut on a back road from Fore St. which cut the distance down to perhaps four miles. That road has long since been abandoned, and I can't even remember exactly where it left Fore St.

Mother also had a brother, Alton Rich, and a sister Etta Farris. Both lived out in the country south of Buckfield on the road to Turner. Uncle Alton was an easy going fellow, always good natured in spite of what some would have regarded as a bad deal in life. His wife was rather flighty, and finally left him for another man. They had three children (a boy named Lewis, about my age, and two girls). They all lived in a little shackey house that Alton had probably built himself and never quite finished. He tried to make a living by working for other people—in the local sawmill or as a lumber-camp cook in Winter. Aunt Etta married a man named Ethan Farris, and they had three children—Ida and Hollis, about my age, and another boy much younger. They lived on a small, unproductive farm, and also depended quite a bit on off-farm work.

Uncle Alton died sometime in the late thirties. I recall seeing him once when I was home abut 1935. His children were scattered and he was unemployed and destitute. He stayed at the farm for several months at that time, and was still cheerful in spite of everything. Looking back at it, I suspect that he was really a more successful man than many who had greater wealth in material things.

Aunt Annie always spent her Summer vacation at the farm, which meant that she would be there for about a month. She did this as far back as I can remember, and up until sometime in the middle twenties. Then her visits became less frequent, and I don't believe she ever came after 1930. We kids used to look forward to her arrival with mixed

Photo 77. Wallace Ripley, somewhere in France, 1918.

decided to leave but within a few weeks he was back and announced that he wanted to stay with us for an indefinite period during which he would work as Dad's second hired man. Uncle John was working for us then. I don't believe that Dad had received any previous warning of this, and I'm not sure how he felt about it. I suppose he reasoned that there was work to be done and that probably Wallace could earn his $40 per month and board. This was in 1920 and farm prices were fairly good. Furthermore, Wallace was a relative—not exactly in distress, but nevertheless a relative. So he went to work and much he had to learn. He was willing but entirely lacking in farm know-how. He didn't even understand the difference between a bull and a steer—something which I had learned at the tender age of about nine, although it took me a little longer to find out what the bull's function was.

Wallace couldn't milk a cow, of course; he couldn't use an ax properly, and he never did learn to drive a team to Dad's satisfaction. But he tried hard and after a few months was performing most farm jobs fairly well. But every once in a while he would make some stupid mistakes that would irritate Dad no end—sometimes to the point of forgetting that Wallace was a relative. But then his mistakes were not much worse than some of Uncle John's, who was born and raised on the farm but who apparently felt that farm work was slightly beneath him and not worthy of his undivided attention.

I'll never forget how Wallace and Uncle John used to bicker. Apparently both realized that Dad really didn't need two hired men, and that one of them might have to go in due time. Wallace was the intruder, of course, from John's point of view, but in some ways he was the better man and probably knew it. In any case, they were both relatives and Dad felt obligated to them both. So they both stayed on for quite some time—probably for over a year—until finally things came to a head one hot Summer's day up on the Grain Barn roof. It had a tar-paper roof that had to be renewed now and then—and that is what we were doing that day. I don't remember the exact circumstances, but Wallace and John were both up there along with Dad and me. One of them did something that irked the other, such as dropping a hot nail inside his shirt collar. One thing led to another, and before long they were about to throw each other off the roof. Dad finally persuaded them to cool off a little, but they continued to battle verbally for days. I recall that John accused Wallace of being unwanted, unneeded, and generally superfluous. Wallace, in turn, implied that John was sloppy, incompetent, and lazy. And no doubt there was a certain amount of truth in all of this. In any case, the problem was not solved until one of them left. I don't remember whether it was John on his trip to Detroit, or Wallace on his farming venture on the old Gage place. But both of them had left by the Winter of 1921-22, because I recall that Dad hired some special help to cut lumber that Winter.

FIXING FENCE
(1/5/53)

Every Spring, as soon as the snow was off, we had the job of "fixing fence." This meant walking around all the pasture fences and repairing them where necessary. Quite a bit of repairing was always called for as a result of drifting snow, falling trees, careless hunters, and other causes during the previous Fall and Winter. So, when the time came, usually around the middle of April, we would load up with hammers, staples, nails, and wire and start out. A crew of two men or one man and a boy was desirable, but oftentimes it was one man and two or three boys, which was lots of fun for the boys but not very productive. Anyway, we would start walking the fences and before long would come to a weak spot that needed attention. Perhaps it was a wire down from a falling limb or maybe a gap in a stone wall as a result of stones rolling off the top. The weak spot would be patched up by some appropriate means, and then we were off to the next one, which was never far away.

On a nice Spring day fixing fence was pretty good sport for the boys. I always suspected that Dad enjoyed it too, except maybe when the boys got completely out of hand, as they sometimes did in the Spring of the year. It really was a nice time to be out in the open—Winter was over and the air was usually full of Spring smells and maybe the songs of some early birds. And yet it was too early for flies and mosquitoes which were such a nuisance later in the season. And so we boys would look upon fence fixing as a sort of picnic—an opportunity for horse-play and sports as well as helping the men patch the fence now and then. Things were different, of course, after Dad died in 1922. I was

only 15 then, but the responsibility for fixing fence fell on me, and I probably got just as mad with Phil and Shirl as Dad ever did with me.

Fixing fence was quite a chore, and, as labor became more expensive, Dad adopted a policy of gradually cutting down on the total job. He did this simply by bringing in the fence lines to include less woodland, where the cattle got very little feed anyway, and where they also damaged certain types of young trees. Originally the cow and young stock pastures probably included all the woodland east of the house and south of the road to town. But even before my time the "sixty acre lot" had been fenced out, and I can just remember the men running a barbed wire fence to cut off the east end of the woodlot that bordered the road to town. The old fence on the boundary line had become useless and it was a question of building a new fence there or closer in. So Dad chose the latter, which meant a considerable saving in time and money. Looking back at it, I'm sure he could have saved more time and money by fencing off most of the woods from what little open pasture there was. But pasture improvement was little known in those days, and Dad apparently felt, as no doubt his Dad before him had, that with pasture it was a matter of taking what the Lord provided and being duly thankful.

Wallace Ripley helped us fix fence a time or two during his stay at the farm. Fixing fence, like all farm jobs, was strange to him, and he seemed very stupid to us kids who had grown up with it. At the same time, we liked to have him along since he was quite willing to join in horse-play now and then, much to Dad's disgust. I recall one occasion Wallace was fooling around with us kids when he should have been helping Dad patch a hole in the fence. Dad didn't say much, but somehow or other he accidentally strung a strand of barbed wire through a sleeve of Wallace's jacket which had been taken off in the stress of playing with the kids. By the time Wallace noticed this, Dad had both ends of the wire firmly fastened to sturdy fence posts, and refused to even consider cutting the wire or removing the staples. So, the only alternative was either to leave the jacket hanging on the wire or to slit the sleeve with a knife. After much debate and mental anguish, Wallace decided on the latter, and for all practical purposes had a one-sleeve jacket from that point on. It was old anyway, and not much loss.

Electric fence was unknown in those days, of course, Most of our fence was either the stone wall built years earlier when the fields were being cleared, or barbed wire put up more recently to replace the wooden rail fences that had rotted out. Some of our stone walls had been topped with a single wooden rail to make them a little higher and to help fill holes where the stones had rolled off. Actually, in many ways stone fences were the best of any. At least they were durable, except for a gradual loss of height as stones rolled off the top. But they were built in the old days of cheap labor, and in my time we never even considered building a new fence of stone. It was just too much work. I recall Dad telling me that he had heard how in the early days stone walls were sometimes built by specialists who traveled around the countryside and laid the rocks into a wall at a price of so much per rod. I never saw it done, and I doubt that Dad ever did either. I suspect that most of the stone walls around home were built between 1790 and 1830. We used to have a joke to the effect that a stone fence should always be built 4 feet wide and 3 feet tall; then, if it blew over, it would be taller than before.

THE WAR
(7/20/53)

I was six years old when "The War" began in 1914. I can still remember telling Dad that I hoped the Germans would lose "because they started it."[6] At that time the whole thing seemed very remote and impersonal to me. This was due, in part no doubt, to my tender age, and also to the fact that we had no radio in those days and had to depend on *The Lewiston Sun* for news. Nevertheless, the war became a major topic of conversation, increasingly so as the U.S. was drawn into it. And well do I remember the propaganda put out to make us hate the Germans, as well as some on the other side to make us doubt our own people and allies.

For several years I suspect that nearly everyone in the U.S. figured it was not our war. In fact, I recall that Wilson was re-elected [in 1916] because "he kept us out of war." But the Lusitania was sunk and other events took place, which increased the tension. And then the same president who had kept us out of war led us right into it. Feeling ran high, many young men around home volunteered, the older men cheered them off, and probably worked harder than usual at their jobs; the women started all kinds of activities to help. Even I learned to knit and worked intensely but spasmodically at the little six-inch knitted squares that were supposed to be joined together into blankets for our soldiers. I recall finishing one or two of the squares, but always seemed to have more urgent things to do.

One of the things that brought the war home to us was the food problem. Many food items became scarce and expensive—sugar, for example. We were urged to economize in various ways and I recall that we were supposed to use a certain proportion of rye flour along with wheat flour. I don't remember that we had any formal food rationing as in World War II, but some of the same problems were present. Sugar seemed to be one of the shortest items, but fortunately we had plenty of maple sirup and used it widely, even in coffee. We had quite a variety of other home-produced food, of course, and didn't really suffer any.

The war really became personal and close when friends and relatives joined the armed forces. Some of them never came back, but whether they did or not, it was a period of tension and uncertainty. Our closest relatives in the army were our cousins, the Clifford boys—Wallace, Earle, and Steve. They came through without any serious difficulties, however, and became loyal members of the American Legion. Some other families were not so fortunate.

A feature of that period that sticks in my memory was the Liberty Loan drives. The financing of the war was not as well organized as in 1942-45, and the bond-selling campaigns tended to be periodic efforts of great intensity, with lapses in between. I recall attending community meetings in "the square" at South Paris at which leading citizens as well as visitors would make speeches, most of them highly emotional. We kids didn't take these affairs too seriously, but it was good experience, and gave us an opportunity to go to town more often. Sometimes these meetings would include singing that was supposed to be inspirational. Included were such songs as "Over There," "K...K...K... Katie," and the like.

Photo 78. Train depot, South Paris, ca. 1910.

And then, when we were well involved in the war, came the "trophy train." This was a trainload of battlefront souvenirs—German guns, helmets, etc.—that was designed to educate our citizens and arouse their interest in buying bonds. The train traveled from town to town with a small crew to explain the various exhibits. It was scheduled to arrive in South Paris on a certain day in Summer, probably in 1917. It was a very hot day, but a big crowd gathered at the train, which was parked on a side track near the station. The crowd was so big in relation to the available entrances and passageways of the train, that a real jam soon developed. I recall standing at the entrance for what seemed like hours tightly wedged in between my folks to avoid getting lost. In fact, for years after that a local standard of comparison in describing congestion was the trophy train crowd. Finally, we got inside and were able to see the machine guns, gas masks, etc. that made up the list of trophies. But I suspect that most people there remembered the traffic jam a lot more vividly than they did the contents of the train.

It was during World War I that we had our first "flu" epidemic, starting in 1918. Almost before we knew it, half the people in town were sick with this "new" disease. In many cases complications such as pneumonia developed. Fatalities were high and included some of our leading citizens. We children escaped fairly easily, but both Dad and Mother caught it. Both developed pneumonia, but fortunately not at the same time. Dad had a light case and was only sick a week or so, but Mother was in bed for fully six weeks. We had a "practical nurse" to take care of her and help with the housework. She was an elderly woman and did very well with her varied and heavy duties. I'm sure she earned her $6 per week and board that was the standard wage for such help in those days.

I recall getting very angry with sister Bernice during one of the long, cold Winters during this period. It must have been 1917-18, which made me 10 and Bunny two years younger. Anyway, we had not been to school for several weeks due to a combination of sickness, blizzards, and snow-blocked roads. Finally it appeared that we would be able to go back to school soon, and we started making preparations. I soon discovered a serious clothing problem: my only pair of "leggings" (heavy wood socks that reached to the knee) had big obvious holes in them which had developed during our long "vacation," and which Mother had not been able to darn due to illness. Mother was still ill, so I turned to Bunny for help since she seemed next in line, although only 8 years old. She objected to my proposal, not, as I recall, because she couldn't darn, but because I had used poor judgment in letting the leggings get into such bad shape before asking for help. This, of course, was a serious offense—a mere female questioning the judgment of a male two years older. So I fussed and fumed and threatened, but all to no avail. Bunny, who was already very busy trying to help with all the jobs that had to be done in the house, was stubborn and implied that if I wanted those leggings mended, I could do it myself. And so finally I swallowed my pride, borrowed a needle and yarn, and patched up the holes, feeling much abused and quite sorry for myself.

The war dragged on during 1918. Finally late that Summer we began to get better news, as well as long casualty lists, and it appeared at last that possibly it would not go on forever. Armistice Day on Nov. 11 was a time of spontaneous celebration, much like VE and VJ days of World War II. I recall that we were excused from school, fireworks were brought forth from some source, and everybody felt pretty good—except, of course, those who had lost close relatives or friends.

And so the war came to an end. I guess we thought it was an end to all wars. Armistice Day was made a national holiday, the "boys" started coming home, and peace seemed assured for all time. Little did we know what lay ahead.

THE MAIL MAN
(2/11/54)

Every day except Sunday and holidays we would look for the mail man, normally around noon. The first mail man of my recollection was Al Holmes, who was a nice old fellow and well known all over town. He traveled by horse power, using a sleigh in the Winter and a buggy the rest of the time. He retired in the mid-1920s, and his successor, Cecil Maxim, used an automobile. But Al was of the old school and not interested in gas buggies.

When Al started on the mail route I never did know, but it must have been well before 1900. I don't recall hearing my folks mention any other mail man, and it may be that he was the first on our route. In any case, he was a well established institution by the time I came along. Not only did he bring us letters, mail order catalogs, and parcel post packages, but he also brought our daily newspaper *The Lewiston Sun*. We had no radio in those days, and depended on "The Sun" for most of our news. So the arrival of the mail man was a big event each day. We kids had the job of running

across the yard to the R.F.D. box and bringing the mail to the house. This was one task we did not mind. In fact, we used to watch for him anxiously, would usually see him coming up the road long before he reached our driveway, and would be waiting for him at the box.

Al had a reputation something like that of the Pony Express. This is, "the mail always got through." But Maine weather, combined with Maine roads of that day, made some real problems for him. Blizzards and drifting snow held him up once in a while, although I don't recall many days in the Winter that he failed to show up. Actually, mud time in April was probably the worst period. Then for 3-5 weeks, depending on the weather, the country roads were mostly a sea of mud—hub deep for a buggy and very difficult to say the least. During that period Al used to hire us kids to carry the mail to the families in our neighborhood—which included the Cummings, the Lovejoys, the Dudleys, and the Swetts. This saved him three miles of bad roads, since we were 1.5 miles off his main route, and he had to double back to "The Corner" (by the cemetery) after covering our neighborhood. On school days we would pick up the mail at his home in town—right beside the Congregationalist Church—and then take it with us on the "school team." On Saturdays, or other non-school days, we would walk to "the Corner" to meet him there. He paid us about 25 cents per day, which seemed like a lot of money to us, even when divided up among 3-4 kids.

Another duty of the mail man was to be a source of information about all local affairs. Many of his patrons would meet him at the mailbox almost daily for a bit of gossip. I suspect that he knew a lot that he didn't talk about, otherwise he would never have finished his route by dark—to say nothing of being discrete. Al would also expedite the mails on occasion by delivering letters without benefit of post-offices. That is, if he picked up a letter addressed to someone farther along his route, and if requested, he would deliver it that day rather than take it back to the post-office for cancellation. This was a real service sometimes, particularly for young people with crushes on each other. I used to take advantage of this once in a while in writing to Daisy Strother who lived further down Al's route in East Oxford.

As mentioned earlier, Al retired sometime in the middle twenties and was replaced by a young fellow named Cecil Maxim. About the only thing I recall about him was that he used a car, at least in the Summer, and drove at breakneck speed. He would come roaring up the road in a cloud of dust, slide to a stop, leave the mail, and be off in another cloud. His car took an awful beating, of course, and was always breaking down. The glamour all left when Al retired.

THE YOUTH'S COMPANION
(4/30/54)

The children's magazine of our day was *The Youth's Companion*. This looked much like a small newspaper except for the higher quality paper, but the contents were stories and articles designed to interest young folks. It was a weekly, I believe, and was printed in Boston. We kids really enjoyed it, and had numerous fights as to priorities in reading it.

One of the regular writers for *The Youth's Companion* was C. A. Stephens, who lived in nearby Norway. Nearly all of his writing concerned his own boyhood days on the farm of his grandfather (the Old Squire) in the Norway hills. As I understand it, C. A.'s dad was killed in the War Between the States. So C. A., along with several teen-age or younger cousins who had suffered the same loss, went to live with granddad and grandma on the old home farm. I don't know what happened to their mothers. Maybe they went along too, but I don't recall ever hearing about them. In any case, C. A. and his cousins, plus his grandparents, were the principals in many a fascinating story, most of which, I suspect, were true.[7]

I don't remember the names of all the cousins, but one was Addison and another was Halstead. Addison was a strong, admirable character with all the virtues that a young man should have, whereas Halstead was somewhat of a cad and not at all dependable. No doubt they actually were not quite as strong or as weak, respectively, as portrayed, but they made good story material and we always knew what to expect from each.

Most of the Old Squire stories were built around commonplace events which were easily understood by all of us. But C. A. had a way of adding a touch of mystery, adventure, or human interest to make them most fascinating. I recall that one of his stories concerned the making of maple sugar and how grandma used a secret method of imparting a fine texture and flavor to the product that no one else could equal. She would perform the final secret operations late at night after the family had retired. But the boys decided to spy on her and finally were able to discover her secret, which apparently was mainly long and vigorous beating of the sugar as it hardened. Grandma was a little put out with the boys, but not seriously so, and even cooperated with them in putting the process on a commercial basis using mechanical devices—developed by Addison, of course.

Another story I recall concerned a visit to the farm by Hannibal Hamlin, who was one of Maine's best known public figures of the day.[8] He happened to arrive at a time when the old folks were away for the day and the youngsters were keeping house. They had cooked up some fried pies, and in keeping with tradition, had concealed in one of them a piece of rug, or something equally inedible. The person who picked up this one and tried to eat it was the goat and was required to finish his meal sitting under the table. I don't recall all the details. Probably the kids intended to remove the loaded pie when Hannibal was invited to stay for dinner (the noon meal). But anyway by some slip he got it and, being a good sport, went under the table like anyone else. It made a fine story.

Uncle John was quite critical of C. A.'s writing and no doubt felt that he could have done much better himself. To be sure the stories usually had very little plot and were built around common-place, everyday incidents that could have happened to anybody of that day and place. Actually I think Uncle John was a little bit envious of C. A. and his ability to write for a living whereas he, Uncle John, who was a graduate of Hebron Academy and a sometime student at the University of Maine, had to work as a hired man. I recall a big argument between John and Dad about one of C. A.'s stories. According to John, the story basically dealt with nothing more than a trip to town with a load of apples, something that every farmer and farm boy in the town had done or could do. "True," said Dad, "but he made an interesting story of it, and what's wrong with that?" John still

insisted that it had no plot, no beginning, no end, and wasn't very interesting. But he must have read it from start to finish to be so familiar with it, and I suspect he was only trying to boost his own ego by demonstrating some of his book learning.

Incidentally, C. A. Stephens and his wife used to attend our church, the Congregational Church in South Paris, and sat almost directly in front of us (each family having its own pew). Mrs. Stephens, who some folks called by her maiden name of "Minnie Plummer," had been a singer of some fame in her earlier years, and even had a stage name of "Madame Scalar." She rarely sang in church, being out of practice no doubt, or possibly content to live in memories of the past. In any case, when she and C. A. came down the aisle, always a little late, it usually created a small sensation, even though they came nearly every Sunday.[9]

The Youth's Companion was about the only "magazine" that we kids were supposed to read, but sometimes we sneaked a little adult reading in the *Ladies Home Journal* which Mother took, or in some of Uncle John's numerous magazines such as *Field and Stream* and *Physical Culture*. The latter, which was published by Bernard McFadden, often contained photos of beautiful girls in scanty (for the day) costumes, and became more interesting to me as I grew older.

MAPLE SIRUP TIME
(6/11/54)

Every Spring along in late March, as the weather began to moderate, would come maple sirup time. We had a small maple grove of some 150 trees. We also had a small shed-like building in the grove which we called a "sap camp," and which was used for boiling the sap into sirup.[10] Many an hour I spent there (some of them happy) tending the fire, ladling the sap from one pan to another, and doing other jobs that had to be done in a primitive set up such as ours was.

In making maple sirup the first job was to decide when to start. This was not a hard and fast date, like March 20, but varied quite a bit from year to year depending on the weather. But along about the middle of March, Dad would start sniffing the air and talking about the prospect. Then one day he would decide that it was time to get ready. So, we would check over the equipment and tools including the spials, buckets, one-horse sled, boiling pans, holding tank, and various other items. We also had to assemble enough fuel wood to boil the sap, and this was stored in a lean-to at the back of the sap camp.

These preliminary steps might take several days to complete since they had to be sandwiched in between other jobs such as finishing up lumbering or fuel wood operations, to say nothing of the daily chores with the livestock. But there would come a day when we were ready and, if the weather looked favorable, we would head for the maple trees with the one-horse sled piled high with buckets, spials, etc. The snow was generally still quite deep, but soft and melting, at least during the afternoon. The first trip around was quite a struggle for both us and the horse since it meant breaking a trail through 2-4 feet of soft, sticky snow.

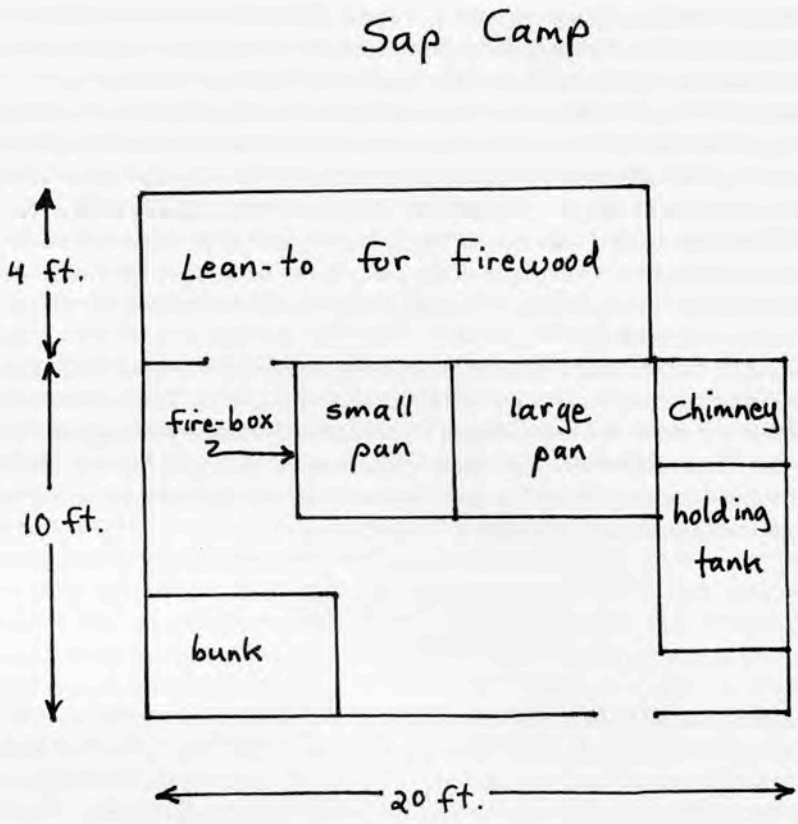


Figure 6. Sketch plan of the sap camp.

The first job in the woods was "tapping" the trees. This meant drilling a hole—I believe it was 5/8 inches in diameter—with an auger bit into the tree to a depth of two inches or so. Then a spial was driven into this hole and a bucket hung from the hook on the spial to catch the sap. Most of our spials were of the metal type, made in a factory on a mass production basis. They were simply hollow tubes about 2.5 inches long and 5/8 inch in diameter, which were inserted about one inch into the tree. The sap then ran out and dropped off the end of the spial into the bucket hanging below. We also had a few homemade wooden spials that were nothing more than small troughs with one end round and hollow to fit into the drilled hole in the tree and to allow the sap to run out.

We worked our way through the grove drilling holes, driving spials, and hanging buckets. If weather conditions were right—a warm day following a frosty night—the sap would start running right away. Actually it never ran a stream, only in drops. Under good conditions, however, the drops would come in rapid sequence.

With good luck we would finish most of the tapping the first day, but we usually took part of a second day as well, especially if we included, as we often did, some 20-30 trees in another woodlot across the road. This was a mixture of hardwoods (sugar maple, beech, oak, etc.) and of softwoods (pine, hemlock, spruce, and fir). Here the maple trees were scattered among the others and hard to get at, in contrast to the main grove where the sugar maples were a strong majority. But Dad, being a thrifty individual, wanted nothing to go to waste, and so we spent a lot of time and effort to tap these few scattered trees and to collect the sap.

Almost as soon as tapping was finished, we had to start collecting. With favorable weather, the buckets on some of the better trees would fill in a few hours. The collecting was done with the horse and sled again and we simply used 5-gallon milk cans, rather than the barrels or hogsheads often seen in pictures of sugaring. We would drive around the circuit dumping buckets into cans until they were all full. Then we would head back to camp and dump the cans into a large holding tank which had a pipeline to the pans below. And so on, until all the trees had been visited.

Meanwhile, someone had to stay at the camp to keep the fire going, to control the flow of sap into the pans, and if he had any spare time, to work up wood for the fire. This job was not hard work but it required constant attention and called for some judgment to keep the sap boiling properly and to avoid burning the sirup as it became more concentrated. We had only a simple set up of two pans. First was a large pan (about 3 × 7 feet) which received sap from the holding tank and where the first boiling took place. As the sap evaporated it was dipped to a smaller pan (about 3 × 3 feet) for final boiling to sirup consistency. This was quite primitive compared to the series of pans, valves, etc. that make up the evaporators used both then and now in larger-scale operations. But our system worked after a fashion, and perhaps was the best one for our rather small volume.

With good luck the sirup in the small pan finally reached a consistency judged to be sufficient for that stage. Then it was allowed to cool and was moved up to the house in a milk can, where Dad would give it the final treatment that night after chores. This step was designed to concentrate the sirup to sales consistency and also to remove any impurities and thus improve its appearance. This was an operation that Dad always did himself, and many a time did I watch him, at least until my bedtime was reached and exceeded to the limit that Mother would permit. He would clear the top of the kitchen stove and set the small sap pan on it with a good fire underneath. Then, as the sap began to boil, Dad would pour milk into it which by some magical process would gradually rise to the top bringing impurities with it to be skimmed off. After about a gallon of milk had been poured in and skimmed off, and after some further concentrating had been accomplished, Dad would decide that the batch was finished and would set it off to cool. The pan would be left tipped at an angle to facilitate the settling process, and next morning the final product would be ladled into gallon cans for sale, or into glass jars for home use.

We kids soon learned that "first run" sirup was usually the best in that it had a nice amber color and a fine maple taste. "First run" was always in strongest demand, and brought the best price. So most of that was sold, with sirup for home use coming out of

the later batches. We never made any maple sugar, but it would have been only another step in the concentrating process.

As we kids became old enough, we were expected to help out as we could, and I recall helping on all of the operations at one time or another. Several times when I was 12 or 13 I was left to tend camp while the men were collecting sap or perhaps doing some lumbering. It seemed like quite a responsibility, but I had good luck and never ruined a batch of sirup like Mid Cummings did once by letting it get too hot as it reached a concentrated stage.

After some 2-3 weeks of sugaring, the snow would be gone, the nights as well as the days would be getting warmer, the flow of sap would slacken, and the season was over. Then we would boil down the last of the sap for home use and collect the buckets, spials, etc. and store them away for another year.

FACILITIES AND CONVENIENCES
(4/7/55)

Life on the farm during my childhood days was fairly primitive. We thought little of it at the time, although even we kids realized that we were better off than some of our neighbors (they lacked running water, which we had), but worse off than most of the people in town (they had electricity and flush toilets, which we didn't).

Looking back at it, I suppose that electricity would have helped most, and I recall family discussions on the possibilities of getting it. The nearest power line then was only 1.5 miles away in the valley (Fore St.), but there seemed little chance of spanning that distance with poles and wire. So, the only hope was a "home plant" with storage batteries, a charger, etc. I believe that a few of these were in use on farms in our county, but they were quite expensive and apparently not very satisfactory. In any case, all we ever did was to talk about it and stick to the old kerosene lamps and lanterns for light, the wood stove for cooking, and man or woman power for the various jobs in the house and barn that electricity could have done even then.[11]

We did, however, have a water system that supplied running water and which was more or less automatic. Until I was perhaps 9 or 10 we had a windmill standing some 35 feet tall over the well by the barnyard (where the Pump House now sits). This was a steel framework, something like those seen at oil wells, with a large set of blades or fans at the top, which would catch the wind and revolve. This was geared to a shaft which ran down through the well cover and connected with a pump set several feet below the top to avoid freezing. This windmill was apparently quite well designed. It would operate in only a slight breeze, and ordinarily gave us all the water we needed for the livestock and household use. But one cold Winter night the windmill blew down and Dad found it flat on its back in the barnyard when he went out to do the morning chores. I'll never forget how gloomy he looked as he came back into the house and told the rest of us about it.

Rather than replace the windmill, Dad decided to get a "pumpjack" powered by a small gasoline engine. The pumpjack was mainly a device of pulleys and levers for transmitting the power of the engine to the pump in the well. It came knocked down (from Sears

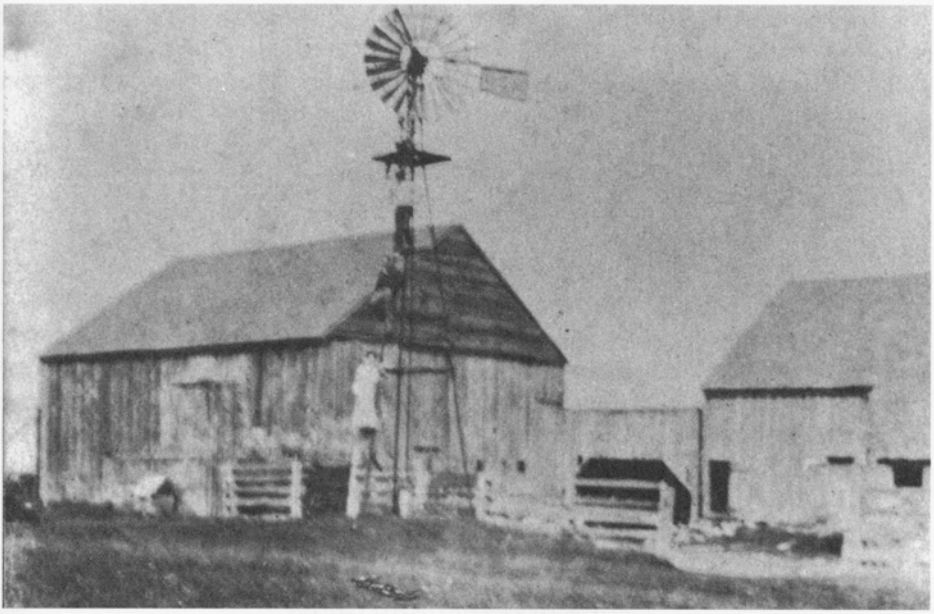


Photo 79. The windmill, ca. 1900. The two figures on the metal frame may be Oscar and a lady friend. The iron-strap foundations can still be seen around the base of the Pump House, which now stands on this spot. The Grain Barn is behind the windmill; the Main Barn is to the right.

and Roebuck, I believe) and we had some problems of assembly and installation. But eventually we got it and the new gas engine installed in proper relation to each other, and to the pump, and found that it worked quite well. I soon learned how to start the engine and to shift the belt from an idler pulley to a "business" pulley on the pumpjack. Whenever I was home from school at a time of day when we needed to pump (generally at noon), I would take over and start the machinery. This was quite a thrill for me, and a source of considerable pride.

Whether powered by wind or gasoline, the valves could be adjusted to pump water either into a tub in the barnyard or into a wooden storage tank in the shed chamber. This tank would be pumped perhaps half to two-thirds full of water, which would then run by gravity to the house or barnyard as needed. Actually the only water outlets in the house were in the kitchen.[12] We had a "bathroom," which was a small room with a bathtub in the corner of the kitchen. The bathtub[13] had to be filled by hand with a bucket, at least as far as hot water was concerned. It did have an outlet to the backyard, as did the kitchen sink. In fact, I believe it was a common outlet. The water simply ran out of the house through a pipe we called the sinkspout, dropped to the surface of the ground in the backyard, and then sought its own level. Most of it accumulated and evaporated in the area behind the woodshed. This, of course, was wet and messy, and probably not too sanitary,

but was a common practice on farms at that time. I can't recall exactly what happened in the Winter, but there must have been an accumulation of ice from the sinkspout. We didn't use nearly as much water in those days, however, particularly in the Winter when once or possibly twice a month was standard practice for bathing.[14]

Our toilet in those days was a *chic sal* affair attached to the back side of the woodshed. The toilet was rather a fine one as such things went, with two large adult seats and a smaller one in the middle for children. It was painted green and decorated with a miscellaneous collection of pictures from old magazines, catalogs, calendars, etc. One of them which I can still recall was a page out of the *Ladies Home Journal* and carried a half-page picture plus a poem on "Migration of the Birds." I spent many a happy hour sitting there reading that poem and the other literature that happened to be at hand—always a Sears and Roebuck catalog and a selection of magazines and newspapers. Mother frowned on this practice, of course, because for one thing the characteristic and rather strong aroma of the place would cling to one's clothing for some time after prolonged exposure. Furthermore, with a big family, competition was fairly keen at certain hours. We did have a smaller reserve affair out in the Carriage House, but that was much less elegant and not used much. It apparently was built primarily for the hired help.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON HIKES
(6/4/56, 8/18/56)

My folks drew a rather fine line on what we kids could do and not do on Sunday. Certain things were absolutely taboo—such as baseball, skating, hunting, fishing, and, of course, card playing. Other activities were frowned upon, but not entirely forbidden. This group included swimming, sliding, and skiing. Finally came a small list of activities that had full parental approval. Reading, meditation, and refined conversation were high on that list. None of these suited us kids at times, but fortunately we were also permitted to go hiking (or "walking," as we called it then). So, when swimming, sliding, or skiing were not in season, we often turned to hiking. And many an adventure did we have, some of which, I am sure, were more sinful than the forbidden things.

One of our favorite walks was over to the old Knight place which adjoined our land on the north. This is not to be confused with the other old Knight's place south of our place and beyond the old Town Farm. This was also a good area for hiking. The place of concern at the moment was the old home of the Hudson Knight family,[15] although "Hud," as we called him, had retired and moved downtown before my time. But I still remember seeing the old gentleman a few times when I was very young. The buildings on the place were closed and boarded up, but some of the outbuildings were easy to get into. It was quite a thrill to push a board aside, creep into the old barn, and roam around in the musty, dark interior. It was a typical early 19th century barn. It had hand-hewn timbers and was very poorly designed by modern standards. But it was a wonderful place to play, and even more fun because we weren't supposed to be in there.

We never did get into the old house until later (around 1923 or 1924) when the place was sold after Hud's death and the woodchoppers moved in. They only stayed a few

Photo 80. The Hudson Knight farm buildings, 1929.

months, and then the place was sold—to some people from Mass., I believe, perhaps for a Summer home. The buildings all burned several years later (around 1940).[16]

We also liked the Knight's place because of the old apple trees that still provided quite a variety of apples to be eaten or thrown as our feelings dictated at the time. Furthermore, the orchard was a fine feeding ground for wild animals—partridge, deer, and squirrels. So we spent many happy hours in the old orchard, remnants of which can still be seen.

Another nice feature about the Knight's place was the beautiful stand of timber—some 100 acres of large, old growth trees of pine, hemlock, beech, oak, birch, and maple. Hud would never cut any of the trees, although many of them were past their prime for timber and many had blown over. In fact, one section I named "the land of fallen trees." Some of the trees were fully four feet in diameter and towered up perhaps 90-100 feet. It was truly an inspiring sight, even for us kids. There used to be an old wood's road through these woods, running from our seven-acre field across to the entrance road to the Knight's place. This was a favorite walk for us and also for the older folks, among "the murmuring pines and the hemlocks." Aunt Mary particularly used to love that walk. But this was all ruined by the woodchoppers in 1923-24.

NEIGHBORHOOD FEUDS
(4/23/62)

We never had anything like the Hatfields and McCoys back in our area of Maine, but a milder variety of feuding did exist. My folks got along fine with nearly everyone, but I recall an episode with the Norlands[17] who lived on the road to South Paris, about half way from our place to town. The family consisted of "Old Man" Norland, his son Fred, their respective wives, plus Fred's several young children.

I don't recall the exact basis of our feud with the Norlands, but it might have started over some deal, maybe a swap in which the Norlands felt they had been beaten. Anyway, it came to a head when their dog disappeared. For some reason they blamed his disappearance on Dad. The first we knew about it Dad received in the mail a very nasty letter from "Old Man" Norland, accusing him (Dad) of many things including dog stealing. Dad more or less ignored the letter, and nothing further ever developed, but the two

families were not on speaking terms for several months. Dad did retaliate in a mild way by naming a bull we had after Fred—a sort of psychic revenge.

In my own small way I contributed to the feud one Summer. It seems that Fred Norland was harvesting hay at the long vacant Hudson Knight place at the north end of our Big Field. This was a job of several days' duration, which meant that Fred would leave his haying equipment there overnight rather than haul it back and forth. We boys soon discovered this, and Mid Cummings and I conceived the idea of playing a little trick on Fred. So one evening after supper, but before dark, we hiked up to the Knight's place. All was quiet; the haying machines were sitting there all by themselves at the edge of the field. We debated tactics for awhile, but finally decided that the thing to do was to haul the machines down an old woods road that led out of the field. So, we grabbed the mower and pushed, pulled, and man-hauled it down the old road for several hundred yards. By that time it was dark and we were tired. The game had lost its zest, and we headed for home, leaving the other machinery right where it was.

The next evening while we were milking, Fred appeared at our place, told us about the disappearance of his mower, and asked if we had seen anyone going in the direction of the old Knight's place. Dad said truthfully that he hadn't. I maintained a discrete silence and tried to look innocent. Fred blustered for awhile, but didn't attempt to beat us up; we had him outnumbered anyway. After Fred left, Dad asked me what I knew about it, and I gave him the whole story. He didn't seem much disturbed, and sort of "looked the other way."

UNCLE JOHN
(12/27/62; 8/29/64; 6/10/74)

My Dad had an older bachelor brother named John, and we kids knew him, of course, as Uncle John, or just plain "John." He lived with us on the farm for many years, working as a hired man and pursuing his hobbies of collecting birds' eggs, hunting, studying physical culture, playing various musical instruments, and several others. All of these activities interfered to some degree with his efficiency as a hired man, but made life more interesting for us youngsters.

John was a sort of misfit, a jack of all trades. He was born (in 1867) and raised on the farm, the second oldest of six children in the family. John dropped out of high school and worked for several years at the Paris Manufacturing Company, "the shop" as he called it. Then, when he was perhaps 35, he decided to complete his education. With financial help from his mother he went to Hebron Academy (Class of 1907) and then to the University of Maine where he studied engineering for two years but never graduated (he would have been in the Class of 1913). But he never got a job in engineering or any related field. Instead, he came back to the farm to work for Dad at about $40 per month plus room and board. With his college experience he had more formal education than any farmer in the community, yet he was obviously not a "success." I think he felt that farming was somehow beneath him, but he was not even a reliable hired man. He was likely to be hunting birds' eggs when his assignment was hoeing corn or some other menial task.

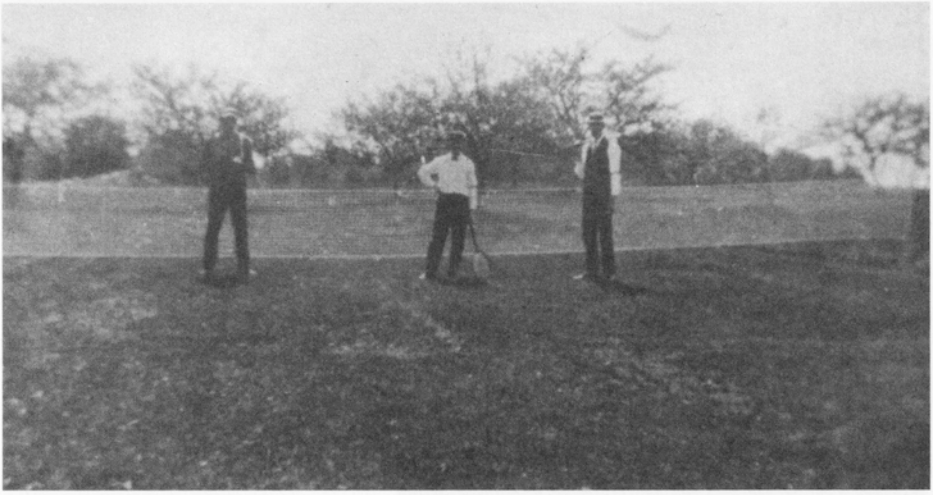


Photo 81. Tennis court in the South Field, ca. 1900. Left to right: Oscar, Wallace Ripley, John.

Once, for example, Dad sent him with the team to harrow a piece of land that urgently needed tillage in order to meet a planting deadline. But it was a nice Spring day and John got the urge to hunt birds' eggs. So he left the team standing in the field and idled off into the nearby woods for 2-3 hours. Dad was pretty mad about that. With more drive John might have been a great naturalist, or a good musician, or a practicing engineer. As it was, he could do many things fairly well, but nothing quite well enough.

In spite of all his weaknesses, Uncle John was real good to us kids. He seemed to have more time than Mother or Dad did to tell us stories and teach us games. He had a fine repertoire of stories, many of which concerned a pioneer hunter and trapper called "Old Jake."[18] I never learned the source of these stories, but they were good clean adventure tales that fascinated kids of 8-12.

Uncle John was also quite a sportsman. Every Fall he would go "gunning," frequently for partridges ("patridges," as we called them), and he often brought back one or more. He didn't like to take anyone along, but he would often tell us where he went. A favorite hunt was down the Town Farm road and over by the old Knight's place, following the abandoned road that once led to East Oxford. Another good spot was among the apple trees scattered along the edge of the woods in the cow pasture in front of (east of) the house.

Uncle John also used to organize "shoots." This meant shooting at flying targets, called clay pigeons, released from a mechanical device called a "trap." Every Summer after haying was finished in the South Field, he would arrange a shoot there, usually on Saturday. This meant first of all setting up the traps (generally two) at the proper spot some 30 feet in front of where the men would stand. The traps were usually covered,

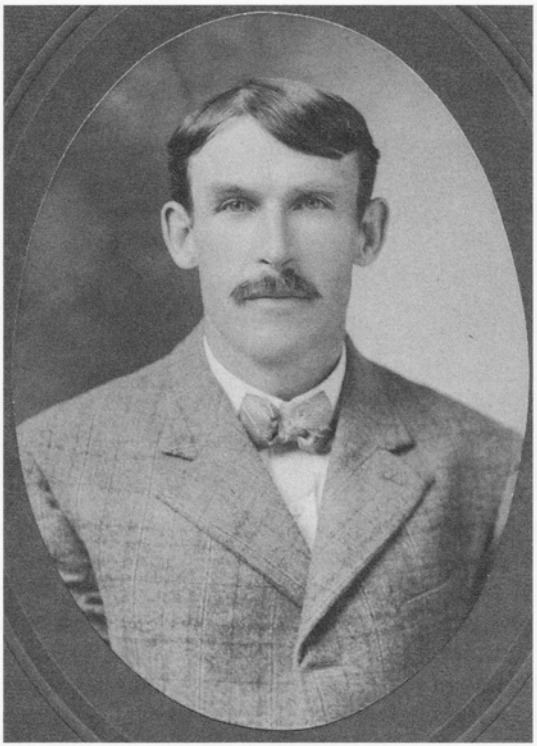


Photo 82. Uncle John, Hebron Academy graduation photo, 1907.

except in front, with some large wooden boxes to protect the trap operator who loaded the clay pigeons and adjusted the trap for elevation and direction. A release cord ran from the trap back to the shooting area so that someone there could release the pigeon at the proper time.

At these shoots the participants were "sports" from the neighborhood and town, perhaps as many as 12-15, would show up with their shotguns and compete for high score in shooting the clay targets, which would fly into fragments when hit. I recall one old fellow that always came. Everyone called him "Tam," obviously a nickname, but the only name I knew him by. He had an ancient shotgun with external hammers, dangerous for hunting but safe enough for trap shooting, I suppose. Charles Swett used to attend and frequently would take a long turn at setting the traps. Uncle John was a good shot and would coach those who needed it. He also sold ammunition which he bought in quantity, and probably collected a small fee to cover the clay pigeons which he also bought by the case. Dad was a good shot too, with a facility for shooting quickly before the target had moved very far. I never had a chance to try since these shoots were discontinued before I was judged to be old enough. But the other kids and I had lots of fun watching and listening. It sounded like the Battle of the Marne, and the conversation was often fascinating too.

Photo 83. Hebron Academy Class of 1907. Uncle John is third from the right in the fifth row from the bottom.

The high point in this shoot program was the year (it must have been about 1917) when John added a running deer to the clay pigeons. This was a cardboard profile of a deer, strung on wires so that it could be pulled rapidly across the field for a distance of 50 yards or so. John spent many an hour designing and building the deer and its propulsion setup, and I'm sure his mind was frequently on this when it should have been on his hired man's duties. But finally all was ready. The deer was mounted on its wires at the lower end of the South Field. A tower of rocks about 7 feet high was built to protect the man who provided the power to move the deer. Actually I believe this was done by turning an old bicycle wheel about which the wire was arranged like an endless belt. After much trial and error, it worked fairly well, except whenever the wire was cut by a stray bullet. This happened a few times, requiring a halt for repairs. I don't recall the details, but each participant got at least one chance to bang away at the moving deer. Each hit was recorded and scored, and the misses were duly recorded in the same way. The deer was pretty well perforated by the end of the shooting, and it was stored away in the attic for many years.[19]

Uncle John used to reload his own shotgun shells. He had all the various pieces of equipment required, and I liked to watch the reloading operation, but never got to do it myself. I guess I was too young, and anyway my weapon was the 22 rifle.

John was also a collector of birds' eggs, and the collection is still at the farm in a specially designed cabinet in the Parlor. I believe that this cabinet was designed by John, although it was built by Uncle Henry Muzzy. At the time of my earliest memory he had quite a collection of eggs which he would unlock on special occasions to show to visitors or to us kids. He kept adding to the collection each Summer and many a time was off hunting birds' eggs when he should have been hoeing corn or picking rocks. His aim, of course, was to add new types or species, so as the collection grew the process of expansion became more and more difficult. He even bought a few rare types, and may have sold others on occasion.

I used to watch John as he prepared the eggs for his collection. This was quite an exacting process. First, with a special tool he would drill one small hole in the egg at a point opposite the best side to be exposed. Then with a blowpipe he would "blow" the egg, which meant puffing away into the hole until the contents had all oozed out of the same hole. Naturally the contents were sometimes in an advanced stage of ripeness and had a strong odor, to say the least. But this was part of the game, and didn't slow down John's blowing or my watching. After blowing, the eggs were added to the collection, properly labeled, of course.

Among other things, John was also a shoe repairman. He had a set of "lasts" and other tools required to put new soles and heels on shoes and perhaps to make other repairs. I think that some of this equipment is still lying around in the shed chamber at the farm. He used it mostly to repair his own shoes, but sometimes would make repairs for us kids too. This was a good job for stormy days after the bean picking-over was finished.

John was also a musician of sorts. He played at one time or another the flute, clarinet, piccolo, mandolin, and maybe a few other instruments. The mandolin I still have,[20] but the others were sold, I believe, in settling his estate. I don't believe he was very proficient on any of these instruments, although he told me once that he once played a mandolin solo in public at Hebron Academy. His practicing nearly drove Mother crazy. Every now and then he would get out his flute or clarinet for a practice session, usually in the living room. Then for an hour or so he would toot away, producing some sounds that seemed weird even to us kids and which must have been excruciating to Mother.

In addition to his noisy music, John had a number of habits that annoyed Mother no end. For example, we usually had homemade cookies on the dining table as a sort of supplemental desert. John liked the cookies and ate them in great numbers. But for some reason he preferred to eat half cookies rather than whole ones. He would reach out, grab a cookie, then break it in two by pressing it against the plate. This he would do many times during a meal, breaking a new cookie and leaving the old half-cookie untouched until later, sometimes until the supply of whole cookies was exhausted.

Another problem with Uncle John was his frequent wish to accompany us on Sunday afternoon rides in our Model T touring car which we acquired in 1916. When this happened, Dad would usually ask me to give up my seat to make room for John. After several such episodes I became a bit sensitive, and once I burst into tears, at which Mother rose to my defense and said that if I didn't go neither did she. Dad then ruled in my favor, and John stayed home with his birds' eggs.

John achieved a high spot in his career when he became the census taker, probably in 1910, for a specified area near us. He regarded this as something of a triumph, reflecting properly his superior educational status. But then, so the story goes, he had trouble completing the area on time and was in temporary disgrace with the census people. In time this was corrected, no doubt, but I don't believe he ever did any more census taking.

One Fall, about 1920, John took off for Detroit. The whole thing was rather mysterious. I recall that he announced his impending departure to Dad on a September afternoon while we were filling the silo. No details, just the bare statement that he would be "leaving next week." We learned later that he went to Detroit to take some training in automobile mechanics.[21] But he returned in a few weeks, very non-committal about his trip and ready to go back to work on the farm.

Uncle John was also an inventor; at least he was if one item qualifies a person in that category. He invented a sort of carpenter's miter box. I don't recall the details, although he described it to me, and showed me a sketch, around 1925. It had a special frame to hold a saw and, according to him, had many advantages over anything in existence at that time. I don't recall being overly impressed. Anyway, he wanted to apply for a patent and said he had asked Aunt Annie, his sister and a lawyer, to help on that process. But she, of course, was not a patent lawyer, and probably didn't know much more about that specialized subject than did John. Nothing ever came of this, and I don't recall hearing any more about the invention.

John was a bachelor, and to the best of my knowledge never showed much interest in females. That interest probably reached a high point one Summer, about 1915, before we had our first auto. John's intentions were evidenced by a program of renovating our covered buggy which had sat unused for years in the Carriage Shed. He hauled it out, cleaned off the dust, and painted it a nice shiny black. Such a buggy was considered to have only one major use, and that was courting, or "sparking" as it was sometimes called in our area. After it was properly renovated, John took the buggy out a few times in the evening. We never knew where he went or who the lady was. It must have been an unsuccessful campaign, because after a few weeks it came to an end and the buggy was put back into storage in the Carriage Shed. Unlucky, too, in love, John was a failure at practically everything he tried, but at least he tried.

OLD JAKE
(5/16/78)

Old Jake was the central character in a series of stories told repeatedly to us kids by Uncle John. Jake was a hunter and trapper, probably meeting most or all of the legendary requirements of a "mountain man." He seemed to travel all by himself mostly (Daniel Boone style), and was always getting involved with bear, particularly the rough and tough grizzlies in the Rocky Mountains.

I have trouble recalling the details of Old Jake's adventures, but one that sticks in my mind had him tangling with some 3-4 full-grown grizzlies. Probably he had been trailing one or more of them, or perhaps he just stumbled on the group. Anyway, so the

story goes, Old Jake found himself in a natural depression facing roughly a ton of angry bear, all intent on eliminating this intruder on their territory, and rapidly closing the gap between them. Jake was armed with his trusty muzzle loading rifle, one shot only without reloading, plus a pair of hunting knives, and years of experience in coping with bears. So he raised the rifle and dropped the closest bear with a shot to a vital point. Then he discarded the gun, grabbed his knives, one in each hand, and slashed furiously until the remaining bears either dropped dead or fled.

Uncle John's other stories about Old Jake had a generally similar theme, with Jake the lonely hero fighting and beating overwhelming odds of bears, rattlesnakes, or perhaps Indians. Happy endings for Jake and his admirers, but not for the bears, snakes, or Indians. But these tales fascinated us kids and would have made great TV violence.

LOCAL CHARACTERS
(3/27/70)

Our town had its share of people different enough to be known as characters. Some of them, as I realized later, were retarded children who never outgrew it. Some had physical or mental handicaps that limited their activities but still allowed them to earn a living. Others were just plain lazy.

One of these characters was Herb Perkins who lived and had his business just across the street from the elementary school that I attended for several years in the Pooduck section of town (area from about the base of the hill to the river). He was a bachelor with an artificial leg, resulting no doubt from a sawmill or lumbering accident. He had a wood sawing outfit for cutting up firewood into proper lengths and made a scanty living from buying and selling wood and perhaps doing some custom sawing. He was a friendly fellow and the kids all liked him. Frequently at recess we would cross the street to talk with him and to watch his buzz saw.

A somewhat similar character was "Gil" or "Bud" Penley who operated a general repair service across the road from the Clifford place where our relatives lived on the Hebron road just south of town. Bud was "handy" with tools of all kinds but concentrated on blacksmithing (except horseshoeing). He was an intelligent fellow with very little formal education, but could repair machinery, do welding, etc. very well. He too was a bachelor, or perhaps a widower, but he had a girl friend (named Nellie May Churchill, who was probably a widow) who operated a farm several miles south of town. She would visit Bud once in a while and rumor had it that the goings on were scandalous. In fact, Bud was known to boast slightly about his accomplishments in this field. Anyway, he was a good man to know if you needed machinery repairs.

Another fellow who lived nearby was Albert Thomas. He had a shack in the woods about a mile out of town on the East Oxford Road. He lived alone and worked at odd jobs for other people. Among other things he was a fiddler of sorts, not a Mellie Dunham,[22] but had lots of volume and stamina. He liked to visit friends in the evening or on Sunday with his fiddle and entertain them at great length. I recall that he honored us

in this way a few times and nearly drove my folks crazy. We kids thought he was great fun, but I'm sure Dad and Mother felt otherwise.

A character seen constantly about town was "Pomp" Crockett who was known as a half-wit and probably was. Apparently he lacked the intelligence to hold a job of any consequence, but was supported by relatives. He was harmless and spent most of the daylight hours strolling around town, often with his arms folded behind his back in a dignified sort of way. He sometimes marched in the Fourth of July parades along with the band, the boy scouts, etc.

A character of a different sort was Guy Buck, the laziest man in town. He was reasonably intelligent, I believe, but oh so lazy! He was a bachelor and would work at odd jobs occasionally, perhaps enough to support himself at a minimal level. He may have had help from relatives also. In any case, he was the butt of many jokes among the townspeople, in local minstrel shows, etc. I recall one minstrel show where a joke was told about him, the main point being that he was worried because he couldn't sleep in the afternoon after sleeping all night and all morning. It brought a big laugh. Another laugh was based on his draft registration for World War I when he was reported to have listed his occupation as "woodsman." Guy was a friendly fellow and would sometimes umpire highschool baseball games for us, which he did fairly well.

Myron Maxim, or just plain "Myron," was a well known mechanic in town. He had a machine shop right in the center of town and did all kinds of service work for farmers and others. One of his specialties was tool sharpening and we always took our cross-cut saws to him for filing. He was a sort of artist at this, and would file a saw for frozen pine, unfrozen hardwood, or whatever the use might be. He handled large numbers of saws in seasons and sometimes got them mixed up. Also a gunsmith, locksmith, etc., he had a bed right in his shop and apparently lived in. I don't know what he did for meals. He was either a bachelor or a widower in my time.

A well known farmer in our area was "Sliptoe" Davis. Actually his farm was in Oxford, on a hill north of town, but he was a good friend of my parents and visited us once in a while. He had a large herd of dairy cattle and consequently was known as a successful farmer. He sometimes rented pasture in our area for his youngstock. One year a few of them broke out and ran wild all Fall and into the Winter. We helped them hunt for them several times and finally, in mid-Winter, they were surrounded and captured, half starved and miserable. Uncle John wrote up the capture and submitted it to the local weekly newspaper, where it was published in due time, filling John with much pride of authorship.

I recall that on one of Sliptoe's visits at our place someone asked him how he got his nickname. He told us that when a young man he had injured his foot in some way and had to wear a slipper while it was healing. After that he was "slippertoe" or just plain "sliptoe."

Sliptoe caused my parents some concern when I was perhaps 10-12 years old. He was driving a herd of dairy heifers by our place to pasture and noted that one of them was in heat. So he stopped to have this heifer bred by our bull. I was supposed to be too young to witness such events, but in the confusion of moving the cattle around I was able to

watch and learn a little biology first-hand. I doubt if it did me any harm, but I'm sure the folks did not approve. That was before the days of artificial insemination.

COMPARISONS WITH THE ERA OF C. A. STEPHENS
(5/5/71)

The stories of C. A. Stephens, as published in the *Youth's Companion* and later in book form, reflect life in our part of Maine some 50 years before my time. Yet much of what he wrote, based mainly on the period 1865-75, also applied quite well to 1915-25, the years when I was growing up on our farm only 8-10 miles from the Old Squire's place. The 50-year interval saw some improvements in communication, in transportation, in farming methods, and in other things. But so far as farming is concerned the similarities between the two periods were more numerous than the differences.

Take haying, for example. C. A. Stephens, on p. 218 of his book *When Life was Young at the Old Farm*, had this to say about haying: "As soon as haying begins, a demon of haste to finish in a given number of days seems, or once seemed, to take possession of the American farmer." This was still true in my time in spite of the fact that we had machines for cutting and raking hay that were not in general use in 1865. Haying became a sort of mid-Summer madness mainly because the farmer was completely at the mercy of the weather in trying to gather in good condition a crop which had only a limited harvesting period but on which his livestock operations for the rest of the year depended heavily. This was true in 1865 and was still true, perhaps to a lesser degree, in 1915. The Maine climate was, and is, good for growing grass, but leaves much to be desired when the curing of grass into hay is to be done by Mother Nature.

For another example, taking "threshing," the separation of oats or other small grains from the straw. C. A. has a chapter on this (pp. 297-307) in the book mentioned above. He talks of threshing being done by itinerants, using machines called "horse-power," "beater," and "separator." In my time it was much the same except that the "horse-power" had been replaced by a gasoline engine and the "beater" and "separator" had been combined into a single unit generally known as a threshing machine. But the job was still terribly dusty and thoroughly disagreeable to a teenage boy assigned, as I was, to take care of the straw as it came out of the machine in a never-ending stream. Now, of course, it is all done in the field by a wonderful piece of equipment called a "combine." With this machine one man can probably harvest more grain in one hour than a crew of three men and three boys could thresh in three days with the equipment of my time, and much more pleasantly.

FAMILY FINANCES
(7/10/71)

Our farm was a fairly good one for those days and for the area, undoubtedly the best in the immediate area and one of the best in the whole town. Evidence of relative prosper-

ity in the past was to be seen in the rather large set of buildings and other farm property that represented considerable capital accumulation over the years. I have little idea of what our net cash farm income was during 1915-1925. It was probably in the range of $500-$1000 per year. It was surely more than that enjoyed by most of our neighbors, but it did not permit much "free spending." We kids were all trained to watch our pennies, along with the puritan ethic of hard work.

Grandmother Parsons (Dad's mother), who lived with us until her death in 1918, was extremely thrifty and was proud to be known as "saving." She saved everything, such as pieces of string, wrapping paper, buttons, etc. She felt that Dad and Mother were extravagant in providing us kids with quite an inventory of toys as well as fairly adequate clothing, food, and recreation. Cousin Earle Clifford told me in 1962 how Grandmother was horrified back in 1905 when Dad spent some $25 for an Edison phonograph and records. This was a little before my time, but during the period when Earle lived at the farm and helped with chores, etc. Earle also told me that Dad would serenade the neighbors once in a while by loading the phonograph into the buggy and taking the music to them.

We kids did not have regular allowances, but did receive moderate pay for certain jobs. For example, we got something like two cents a row for thinning sweet corn, regardless of the length of the row. This was done in June when the corn plants were 2-4 inches tall, and consisted of walking along each row and removing the excess plants down to the approved level of 3-4 per hill. It was a monotonous job and hard on the back, but it meant cash money and we stuck to it fairly well. We tried to save some of the money for Christmas, but most of it was blown for Fourth of July items such as firecrackers and rockets.

Grandmother's will left her property, which was the farm and little else, to all of her children (except John) more or less equally. This meant that to keep the operation going Dad had to mortgage the place to pay off the other heirs. I never knew the details, but I understood that the mortgage amounted to some $5000, a lot of money in those days. It was held by people in town, by the name of Burnell, who had inherited money and made a business of lending it on gilt-edge farm mortgages. Fortunately we were able to pay off the debt from sale of timber during the mid-1920s, and did not have to face the frustrating problem of trying to pay old debts during the big depression of the early thirties.

Each of us kids, by some magic, had a small savings account at the local savings bank. I'm not sure, but the major source was probably inheritance from some more affluent relatives, such as "Great Uncle" John in California.[23] He had been raised on the farm long before my time (1850s and 1860s), and then as a young man went to California where he prospered in the wholesale grocery business. He used to send us $25 or so every Christmas, and he was known as our richest relative. My savings account amounted to some $400 by the time I was through highschool. I withdrew some of it for college expenses, but being thrifty and dedicated to hard work, took advantage of work opportunities in college and was able to rebuild my savings. In fact, I believe the account was larger when I finished college than when I started.

We normally had one hired man, sometimes two. They were paid about $40 per month, plus room and board. This was more or less standard in those days, but income-wise

(although not in status) the average hired man was probably about as well off financially as the average farm operator in the area. In addition to these regular hired men, we would employ day labor for certain critical jobs such as corn harvesting, silo filing, apple picking, etc. Labor was plentiful in those days, and we could generally find all we needed right in the community. Wage rates for day labor, as I recall it, were around $2-$3 per day, plus dinner (noon meal).

Our financial picture in those days did not include much in the way of insurance. Medical and automobile insurance were unknown. Fire and life insurance were available, but coverage was usually low. I believe we carried about $2000 fire insurance on the farm buildings, and Dad had life insurance of around $1000. Many farmers, perhaps most, carried no life insurance, thinking that the farm itself provided protection for the family. No doubt it did to some extent, but I'm sure that many families suffered for lack of ready cash to meet expenses following the farmer's death.

Our farm income was somewhat seasonal, normally reaching a peak in the Fall when the cash crops, such as sweet corn and apples were harvested and sold. Another peak, varying with demand, sometimes occurred in the Winter with the sale of timber. Farm expenses were also somewhat seasonal, reaching a peak in the Fall with harvesting costs and with property taxes coming due in November or December. I recall that one year we were so poor in December that we skipped Christmas entirely.

FARM LIFE BY THE SEASONS
(4/10/72)

Life on the farm, by necessity, was seasonal. This was particularly true in Maine where the rugged climate leaves farmers with little flexibility on the timing of many farm jobs. For example, to produce a crop of sweet corn required that the land be plowed in time for planting between May 15 and May 30. But normally the fields were too wet to plow until about May 1. So, nature gave little choice on priorities during May 1-15. Similarly, the harvest of sweet corn was restricted to a period of perhaps 10 days in early September, late enough for the crops to mature, but early enough to escape the first killing frosts of the Fall. And so it was with the other crops and most other farm jobs. The livestock operations were less subject to seasonal domination, as were certain "overhead" jobs such as blasting rocks and repairing of buildings and machinery. But by and large our farming had the seasonal rhythm of nature, representing also man's adjustment to nature over long years of trial and error.

Springtime

Springtime, roughly from April 1 to June 15, was perhaps the nicest time of year. April was mud time and the dirt roads were all but impassable for 2-3 weeks. But most of the snow had melted, temperatures were generally mild, and the promise of Spring was in the air. April was the time to repair pasture fences, to move firewood into the woodshed,

to haul manure out to the fields, and in general to get ready for cropping operations. One assignment that generally fell to me and sometimes to Phil was "knocking cow chips" in the fields. This meant taking a croquet mallet or some such weapon and searching the fields for last season's cow droppings, deposited when the fields were pastured in the late Summer and early Fall. When one was found, and this was not difficult, our job was to bat the material around until well distributed and thus to maximize its fertilizing effects on the grass. This was a fairly pleasant job for a nice Spring day, but it could get monotonous in time.

May was the time for land preparation and crop planting. It was a critical period, and one of some worry if work on the land was delayed by too much rain, machinery breakdown, or other problems. The cropping program each Spring on our farm was generally 4-5 acres of sweet corn, 2-3 acres of oats with grass seeded in the oats, 1/2 acre of potatoes, and a good-sized garden. The crop rotation was basically corn, corn, oats, and several years of hay. This meant only 2-3 acres of "broke up" (sod land plowed) each year, and did not by any means bring all of our crop land (some 70 acres then) into the rotation. In fact, with our limited power supply (2 horses) Dad preferred to plow and plant only the fields best adapted to cultivation by virtue of topography, stoniness, etc., and to leave the other fields in more or less permanent hay. Such hay fields gradually "ran out" and eventually produced only a small crop of poor bushy hay. In fact, the Seven-Acre Field was never plowed in my memory and neither was the 12-Acre Field except for about two acres in the northeast corner. Both of these fields were left uncut and reverted to woodland beginning about 1924.

June was the time to finish up what crop operations should have been done in May and to cultivate and hoe the sweet corn. Many crops could be planted as late as June 10 with some hope for success, but this was risky and also a source of embarrassment for a farmer to have to admit to others that he planted sweet corn later than June 1. Corn planted May 15-20 was usually big enough to cultivate and hoe by June 5-10, and this was our main farm activity for 2-3 weeks in June. First we would cultivate, using a 1-row machine drawn by one horse. The horse was ridden or led by one boy, usually me. This scratched the soil to a depth of perhaps 4 inches, digging out some of the weeds and loosening the soil to facilitate the hand hoeing which followed. During this period we kids would also thin the corn, leaving only 3-4 plants per hill. All of our corn was hand hoed at least once, a very heavy labor input that is out of the question today. But labor was cheap in 1915-20.

Spring was also the time to spray our apple trees. We tried to cover them two or three times, starting with a "dormant" spray in April and followed by others in May. Our equipment was an inadequate hand pumped affair (I pumped), but we did the best we could and generally had a crop of fair quality. Some of the modern insects and diseases of apples had not yet appeared.

Another Spring activity was hanging May baskets. This was mainly a social event, but it did give the men a chance to get together and discuss farming, among other things. Spring was also fishing season, and also included hunting calves in the woods in cases where a cow had a calf while out to pasture. This was sometimes a big job because the

mother cow seemed instinctively to pick the most remote, hard-to-find spot for hiding her baby.

Summer

Summer to us was the period from about June 15 to Labor Day, a period dominated by hay harvesting, but that also included other activities. Among these was "suckering" the sweet corn, which meant going down each row of corn by hand and cutting off the suckers (small stalks from the base of the plant) with a knife. The theory was that this would remove surplus vegetative growth and permit more of the plant energy to go into the ears. I doubt if this was a valid theory, but Dad felt that it was. So, for several days in August when haying was most over, all of us, men and boys alike, would be "suckering" the corn. It was a monotonous job and seemed endless and futile to me. I remember that Uncle John used to talk to himself while on this job, probably to cheer himself up, apparently not realizing that the rest of us could hear him through the thick mass of growing stalks, then some 6 feet tall. We boys would listen and try to figure out what he was saying. Once I remember he talked quite loudly and emphatically about something that sounded like "middle of the row." I thought at first he was referring to the corn rows, but I came to realize that he was saying "middle of the road," referring to an incident of his younger days when he had become angry with another man or boy and considered throwing or kicking him into the middle of the road.

The end of the Summer found us beginning to pick sweet corn and getting organized for the Fall harvest season. Also, we kids went back to school. This took place with an outward show of disdain, but actually I think we were eager to get back to meet the challenge of learning and to see our old friends as well as the new kids that always showed up.

Summer was also the baseball season. Semi-pro baseball was popular in those days, and Norway-Paris had a team in the Maine League for many years. The players were mainly college boys from New England schools, with a sprinkling of older men, local teachers, etc. who were skillful enough to compete. They played a fairly snappy brand of baseball and competition was keen among the 6-8 teams of the League. Dad was a sports follower and we used to attend many of the local games which were played at the fair grounds. Our attendance was usually restricted by farming duties to Saturday afternoons, but I'm sure some of our neighbors felt that we were sinful in neglecting our farming even to that extent.

If we had any spare time in the Summer, it was used for "overhead" work such as repairing buildings, blasting rocks, and burning ground hemlocks (juniper) in the pasture.

Fall

The Fall season started about Labor Day and continued through October and most of November, perhaps to Thanksgiving. The Oxford County Fair normally was held in

early September. Fall was mainly a harvest time, but it also included hunting, viewing the beautiful Fall foliage, and the beginning of woods work. The foliage probably was not fully appreciated by us kids, but we were aware of it, and the Fall was really a nice time, particularly October when the temperatures were usually mild.

Winter

Winter, essentially December through March, was cold and snowy, but was also a busy, happy time. It included Christmas, always a big event on the farm, and it included work and play in the clean, cool out-of-doors free from the insects of other seasons. Moreover, with reduced pressures from farming operations, we had more time for social activities in the community. Winter, however, was the time when sickness seemed to strike. One Winter, 1918-1919, the flu was prevalent, followed in many cases by pneumonia.[24]

One minor Winter job was chopping horse meat for the hens. Probably by bitter experience our ancestors had learned that hens produced better in the Winter if they had some meat to eat. So late every Fall we would try to find a quarter of horse meat from some source, perhaps a neighbor who had an old horse to dispose of. This chunk of protein would be dragged into the grain barn next to the area occupied by our hens. It froze solid and kept all Winter. One of my daily jobs was to take an ax and chop up into small bits a suitable quantity of this meat for the hens. They seemed to like it, and with careful planning the chunk would last all Winter. We didn't realize it, of course, but what we were doing was to supply certain essential proteins and vitamins now included in all good poultry mixed feeds.

Sometime in March would come the annual town meeting, which presumably was "democracy in action." Dad usually attended, and we kids also if permitted. Various items of town business were discussed and settled, usually in a conservative way. Looking back at it, I suppose that the meeting was dominated by tax payers concerned with keeping property taxes low. But the group always approved enough funds to provide fairly good schools and a moderate level of other services regarded as essential.

INPUTS, OUTPUTS, AND COSTS
(4/13/72)

One of the significant long-term trends in U.S. farming has been a decline in man labor inputs, both in total and per unit of production as labor became relatively more costly. Along with this has been an increase in most other inputs such as machinery, fertilizer, and pesticides, as well as a rise in yields per acre and per animal. It is more difficult to pinpoint the exact data for a particular farm, such as ours, but I'm sure the trends on our place were generally the same. In 1915-25 we used less labor and more machinery to produce a ton of hay than was used some 50 years earlier. The differences can be seen by comparing the practices on our place in my time with those on the Old Squire's farm in 1860-70, as related by C. A. Stephens. For example, in the book *When*

Life was Young on the Old Farm, the chapter "Haying Time" indicates that in those days the grass was cut and raked by hand and also unloaded by hand at the barn. In my time these operations were all mechanized, at least to some degree.

For our farm the 1915-25 picture in terms of total annual inputs and outputs was roughly as follows (exclusive of housework):

Inputs

Man labor: Two men full time, plus day help, boys, etc., equivalent to perhaps 0.5 men, a total of 2.5 men for the year.

Horses: Two work horses weighing about 1600 lbs each, plus one driving horse of perhaps 1000 lbs. Total value about $700 (?), making an annual input (10%) of about $70.

Equipment: Quite a list of horse-drawn machinery for tillage, planting, harvesting, and hauling. Also a 6-horsepower gasoline engine and related machines for chopping silage and for cutting firewood into proper lengths. Plus an inventory of hand tools such as hoes, shovels, saws, drills, etc. Total value at that time perhaps $1500 (?), making an annual input (10%) of around $150.

Feed: In addition to home-grown hay, silage, and oats, we bought considerable grain and concentrates for the livestock and poultry. A total of possibly $800 per year.

Fertilizer: Along with farm manure, we used purchased fertilizer mainly on sweet corn, possibly a total of 5000 lbs annually at about 3 cents per lb (?)

Real Estate: Land and buildings, valued at $6000-8000 at that time, making an annual cost (10%) of $600-800.

Outputs

Livestock Products: Mainly milk and dairy calves, but also small quantities of eggs and chickens. Plus dairy and poultry products and pork used at home. Total value of sales perhaps $2000 per year, plus $300 estimated valued for home use.

Crops: Mainly sweet corn and apples, plus small volumes of dry beans, potatoes, maple sirup, etc., a total of possibly $1000 (?) per year for sales, plus $250 (?) for home use. Feed crops, mainly hay and silage, were fed to livestock on the place.

Forest Products: Logs, bolts, and pulp wood sales, varying from year to year, but averaging perhaps $1000 per year, plus $150 for fuel wood and lumber used at home.

One aspect of farmers' adjustment to changing conditions can be seen in the shift from man power to animal power, the shift from oxen to horses, and finally the shift from animal power to mechanical power in the form of tractors, motor trucks, electric motors, etc. In 1915-25 the change from animal to mechanical power was underway in our area, but the shift from oxen to horses was largely completed. On our place oxen had been used earlier, possibly as late as 1890, but in my time they had been completely

replaced by horses. Some of our neighbors, however, still used oxen in 1915-25, and defended them as "steady" and "reliable." But Dad, and most other farmers of that era, felt that oxen were "too slow," and I had no experience with them except by observing them on neighbors' farms and in breaking roads in snow time.

FOOD STORAGE
(2/7/74)

We produced a lot of our own foot on the farm—essentially all of our potatoes, fruit, and vegetables, all of the dairy, poultry, and maple products, and much of the meat. The main items purchased were flour, sugar, coffee, tea, spices, shortening, and a few miscellaneous things. Most of our homegrown food had a seasonal production pattern. And so we had a storage problem, although I don't believe we thought much about it as a problem. It was more an opportunity.

The house cellar was our first line of storage. Here would be stored a year's supply of potatoes, apples, and maple sirup, all of our canned fruit and vegetables, which was a year's supply except for limited purchases, and a sizable quantity of eggs in a water-glass solution. Meat was a special problem. It was stored "on the hoof" until around mid-December when we usually slaughtered two hogs and sometimes a beef critter. The meat, reduced to manageable chunks, was stored in a cabinet in the shed chamber where it would freeze and keep nicely all Winter. The hams were taken down town to a local meat market to be cured and smoked. Then they would keep almost indefinitely and were used mainly after the frozen meat was gone.

Dairy and poultry products were mainly used on a current basis without any large quantities in storage. Eggs, however, were quite seasonal in production, with a peak in the Spring. They were low in price then also. So we would often "put down" in water glass a large crock or two. They seemed to keep ok for several months and would be used mainly in the Fall when production was seasonally low.

ICE HARVESTING
(2/7/74, 2/8/75)

Every Winter, usually in January, we had the job of filling the ice house. This was a small, barn-like building in the backyard, perhaps 100 feet from the main house. It was about 15 × 20 feet in size and tall enough so that ice could be piled some 8 feet in height. It was insulated with about 8 inches of sawdust in the double-sided walls. The ice was simply laid into this structure in layers, with nothing between the layers, until the house was filled nearly to the eaves. Then a layer of hay, perhaps a foot thick, was put on top of the ice. This gave us plenty of ice for a year's use of our own, plus a small quantity for Col. Eustis. The ice was used during the warm weather to cool the milk and also to keep other food cool as needed. The former was done by cold water in a big wooden tub or tank in the cellar, into which 5-gallon cans

Photo 84. Softball game in progress in the West Field, ca. 1933. The Ice House can be seen between the two figures in white shirts on the left.

of milk would be placed. Other foods needing refrigeration was kept in an icebox in the dining room.

The timing of the ice harvest depended on the weather. The desirable thickness for the ice was 15-16 inches. This was generally reached sometime in January. We would check the ice pond every few days starting in late December, and would be ready to go when the proper thickness was attained. This meant discontinuing woods work for a few days, but with good luck for only 3-4 days. The ice pond we used was not on our land, but on the Town Farm property. The dam was built, so Dad told me, as a sort of community project, probably around 1900. Some of the neighbors usually harvested some ice there also, but mainly it was for us.[25]

The first step was to scrape the snow off a suitable area of ice. Then the surface was marked off in proper dimensions, using a homemade wooden guide and an ice ax to scratch the lines. We made the ice cakes about 18 by 24 inches, with the depth hopefully around 15 inches. The ice saw was inserted in a hole chipped with an ice chisel at an appropriate spot, and the sawing began. The ice saw was a special tool made only for one purpose. It was shaped something like a big cross-cut timber saw, but had larger teeth and only one handle.

We generally had two men sawing. As soon as enough cakes had been cut for a load, perhaps 25-30, they would be pulled out of the water, loaded onto a flat bed platform on the logging sleds, and hauled to the ice house. The cakes were quite heavy, probably weighing well over 100 pounds apiece, but mostly it was a matter of sliding them along an inclined plane built of wood. They slid quite easily and the handling was not too difficult.

Sometimes, of course, the weather would turn bad right in the middle of the ice harvest and would delay us for several days. I recall one disastrous season, probably 1923 or 1924, after Dad died in 1922. Lee Dudley and I tried to harvest some ice, but the January thaw came at just the wrong time and ruined our plans. In fact, we never did harvest any ice that season, but bought it downtown for the ice box. We had already stopped selling milk by then, so didn't need any for the big tank in the cellar.[26]

We had one ice customer: Col. Eustis who, with his family, spent every Summer for many years until sometime in the 1920s at the old Town Farm. The Colonel would drive into our backyard every few days with his horse and buggy to get a piece of ice, perhaps 30 pounds, for his ice box. He probably also got a few vegetables and apples in season. I doubt that we charged him much, if anything, for these items. Besides, the Col. gave us lots of free advice on how to cure earaches, etc., and let us play tennis on a court he laid out at the Town Farm.

BEES AND HONEY
(2/8/74, 4/21/78)

We always had a few hives of bees, around 5-6, on the farm. In the warm weather they were kept under a row of 3-4 apple trees just south of the ice house. For the Winter they were moved into the house cellar to protect them from the sub-zero temperatures. The bees served two main purposes. One was to provide honey for us to eat and to give away or sell. The other was to insure pollinization of the apples and certain other crops, particularly red clover seed. The latter was not harvested as such in our area, but probably helped the hay crop by reseeding itself. Maine is not an ideal place to raise bees and produce honey. The main honey flow depends on a few sources, such as red clover and apple blossoms, that are available only for short periods of perhaps 2-3 weeks.

The management of our small bee enterprise was aimed at creating and maintaining strong colonies that would pollinate actively and also make enough honey to feed themselves plus a surplus for human use. Actually, management was rather casual, consisting mostly of preparing and putting on supers in the Spring and taking them off in the early Fall. We also must have taken action now and then to build up the strength of weak colonies, although I don't recall anything special along that line.

The technology of bee handling has improved some since 1920, but I believe that most of the basics were developed before 1920 and that changes since then have been minor. For example, the split sections that we use now for comb honey were apparently not available in 1920. We did, however, have a more primitive type that achieved about the same results but with a higher input of human labor in preparing the super. In brief, it required putting the foundation wax into each section separately and with the use of heat to bind the wax in place. Supers for surplus honey were put on the hives in May, ahead of apple blossom time, and taken off (full of honey if we were lucky) in late Summer or early Fall. If the bees swarmed, as they often did in May-July, we would attempt to capture them, and always had an empty hive or two on hand for that purpose. We had no facilities for extracting honey. So all of our supers were the square section type with

the wax included. I don't recall that we ever had any large yield of honey. Most of it was used at home, although we must have sold some around town, or perhaps we gave it away to friends and relatives.

Swarming was always an interesting event. The swarm would usually settle first in one of the apple trees near the hives. One of the men would set a ladder against the tree, and then, suitably clothed, climb up to capture the swarm in some appropriate way. Usually this would mean shaking them into a basket or directly onto the ground in front of an empty hive. Sometimes the best solution would be to cut off the limb they were attached to and carry it and the bees down to be shaken into or in front of the hive. I recall one swarm that left in a hurry. Aunt Mary was spending the Summer with us as she often did after her husband[27] died, and saw the bees leaving. She dashed out beating on a dish pan with a big spoon, which noise was supposed to make the bees reconsider. She chased them all the way up through the Big Field still beating the pan, but they just kept on going, and were last seen heading west.

CROP PRODUCTION, 1915-1925
(5/9/74)

Our main crops on the farm were hay, oats, sweet corn, and apples, with minor acreages in garden and potatoes, somewhat as follows:

Crop	Acres
hay, old	34.0
hay, new	20.0
oats	3.0
sweet corn	5.0
apples	7.0*
garden	0.5
potatoes	0.5
Total	*70.0*

*plus many scattered trees along fence lines and in the horse pasture

Land preparation centered mostly on the acreage in sweet corn, oats, garden, and potatoes. We followed sort of a crop rotation of:

sweet corn	1-2 years
oats	1 year
hay	5-7 years

Obviously the rotation did not involve all the cropland. Most of the old hay was on land plowed very infrequently. With only two horses for power, we could only do the necessary land preparation on about 8-10 acres annually, leaving the balance of our cropland out of any crop rotation in the usual sense. This might appear to have been a weakness in farm management, but on balance it probably was an optimal adjustment at that time.

In preparing land for sweet corn, the first step normally was to spread manure. This was normally done in April with a manure spreader. This was basically a 6 × 12 foot rectangular box on wheels with a flexible floor geared to the wheels so that the manure was gradually moved to the rear where a whirling beater scattered it evenly on the ground. First, of course, the manure had to be moved from the storage shed adjacent to the cows and horses [the sources of the manure], to the spreaders. This was done by hand, using a special tool called a dungfork (similar to a present-day spading fork), and was hard work. It required many man hours, but in those days manure was regarded as something precious, not as a nuisance as it often is today. We used it mainly on the sweet corn land, at the heavy rate of about 20 loads (tons) to the acre. It had some carryover effect, of course, on following crops in the rotation.

The next step was plowing, in the Spring or preferably in the Fall. This was done either with a walking plow, with a man holding the two wooden handles at the rear and with the reins for the two horses around his neck for easy grabbing, or with a sulky plow. The latter implement provided a seat for the operator, but he rarely used it for fear of being thrown off as the plow made frequent violent contact with the stones in the soil. Rather, he would walk behind with the reins in his hands but with the plow share controlled by the plow frame and thus not requiring direct contact by the operator. This was easier than the walking plow, but most farmers felt it didn't do as good a job, especially on sod land (break-up). So, the sulky tended to be using mainly for plowing old ground (land where a cultivated crop, such as sweet corn, had just been grown) and the walking plow was preferred for sod. The sulky plow also required less human effort because it had two bottoms, one for going out, so to speak, and one for coming back. This took only a mild effort, with the levers provided, to raise one bottom and lower the other at the end of the furrow, whereas our type of walking plow required a major effort to shift the moldboard on its swivel to permit coming back in the adjacent furrow. Some walking types lacked this swivel feature, and could only sort of plow around the field, leaving a "dead furrow" on either side and a big hump in the middle.

After plowing came harrowing, first usually with a "wheel" or disk harrow. This had a series of sharp revolving disks (about 18 inches in diameter) mounted on an axle which could be set at varying angles, depending on conditions and how deep a cut was needed (the sharper the angle, the deeper the cut). After one or more passes with the disk, we would shift to the spring-tooth harrow which was basically a lot of spring-like teeth mounted on a frame and adjustable for depth. It was dragged over the field and did a pretty good job in our fairly light soil. Finally, if necessary, would come the spike-tooth, or smoothing harrow, a series of big spike-like teeth also attached to a frame with some adjustments possible for angle and depth. This was used mainly to give a nice smooth seedbed for seeding of oats and grass.

After the land was suitably harrowed, assuming adequate but not too much rain, it was ready for planting. But the actual time of planting depended on the crop and expectations as to temperatures. Normally we could plant sweet corn by May 15 with little chance of frost damage. Oats and some garden stuff could be planted earlier, sometimes by mid-April. In planting sweet corn we used a commercially made, one-row planter drawn by one horse. It had a compartment for seed and another for fertilizer, plus metering devices to control the quantities of each going into the soil. It also had a gadget to pull soil over the seed and a wheel in the rear to compact the soil around the seed. Finally, it had a marker, basically a stick some 4 feet long with an adjustable crossarm that would scratch a line in the soil at the proper distance for the next row.

Oats and grass seed were planted by hand, using a man-carried, coffee-grinder sort of device to throw the seed out perhaps 6-8 feet on either side in a fairly even distribution. Then the seed was covered with a light touch of the smoothing harrow and usually compacted with a land roller. Nearly all grass seedings were made with oats as the nurse crop. This gave the grass (normally a mixture of red clover, timothy, and red top) a good start, although it did not grow tall enough to harvest the first year, the year of the oat. Potatoes and garden crops were planted by hand.

Sweet corn planted by May 15-20 would usually be big enough for thinning and hoeing by early June. Thinning was to reduce the stand to 3-4 plants per hill, and was done mainly by us kids. We were paid something like two cents per row, regardless of the length of the row. We thought it was pretty hard work, but were highly motivated by the need for cash to buy fire crackers for the Fourth of July. So we worked quite diligently and kept careful records of the numbers of rows done. Hoeing was a hard job of stirring the soil and killing weeds after a horse-drawn cultivator had done its work. This latter tool was sort of a small smoothing harrow with adjustment for width, and with handles for control by a man. It was drawn along between two rows and I often had the job of riding and steering the horse pulling the device. This was ok in good weather, but I recall nearly freezing one cold day in early June sitting high up on old Stripe[28] as Dad, who was at the handles, kept insisting on "one more row." The cultivating and hoeing job was normally repeated in late June, but had to be finished not only for corn but also for the other row crops, by about July 1 so that haying could start on July 5, that magic date.

In July and most of August the main farm job was haying, but we did try to "sucker" most of the corn in mid-August. This latter was an endless, monotonous job that probably did no good except, perhaps, to build character in the men and boys available. It consisted of moving down the row, usually on hands and knees, with a knife in hand and cutting off the side shoots, or suckers, that had developed. This was supposed to strengthen the ear-forming ability of the corn plant, but I learned later that there was no real evidence that it did.

The apple crop required attention too during the year. Some pruning of the trees was done every year, usually during the Winter or early Spring as it could be worked in. Most of the trees were fertilized every Spring, using nitrate of soda (nanos) spread by hand under the trees. Several sprays, normally two or three, were applied during April-June to control the main diseases and insects. This was a minimum program, but seemed fairly

Photo 85. Picking sweetcorn, 1919. Left to right: Phil, Bun, Mert.

adequate in those days. It was done with a primitive machine using man or boy power on a pump to maintain the air pressure that forced the spray material out of the tank onto the trees. The main insecticide that we used was lead arsenate, and the principal fungicide was called lime-sulphur—both have been obsolete for many years.

Another step was picking stones. This was a job to be done at least once each rotation, normally after plowing, but before harvesting. Plowing always produced a good crop of stones no matter how many times the piece of land had been tilled in the preceding century. Equipment for picking stones was a so-called "stoneboat," or drag drawn by two horses. This was a flat wooden affair, about 4 × 10 feet, made of 2-inch planks with a slight up-curve at the front to facilitate movement. The crew usually consisted of 1-2 men plus any number of boys. They would pick up the smaller stones and carry them to the drag. The larger ones would be rolled onto the drag, which when loaded would be hauled to a suitable place, such as an established stone pile,[29] and dumped. It was not necessary to get rid of all the small stones, only those big enough to interfere with planting, cultivating, or harvest.

THE TRADING CENTER—SOUTH PARIS
(5/22/74)

South Paris was our trading center in 1915-1925, and it still has many of the features of that period. The same buildings, for the most part, occupy the spaces in the business center, but use has changed in many cases.[30] For example, the laundromat (undreamed of in my day) now uses the building which in my time was Eastman's Clothing Store, operated by George Eastman, a friendly fellow who maintained a pot-bellied, woodburning

stove for men to sit around and socialize. He also had a telephone which he allowed us kids to use in case we needed to call home for some reason after school. The store now used by the Cornwall wood products outfit was formerly Fred Wright's grocery store and was called that long after his death in 1918-1919 from the flu. At that time there was another meat and grocery store diagonally across the square (as the business center was called). Howard's Rexall Drug store[31] in the old square is still a drug store, and the banks[32] are, I believe, in about the same locations as in my time.

A building whose use has necessarily changed is the old livery stable, now used as a garage. The former hotel (Andrews House) in front of the livery stable became a nursing home and still is.[33] A feature of my time that disappeared many years ago was the town watering trough, a big circular affair, perhaps 10 feet in diameter, right in the center of the square. This, of course, was to provide drinking water for the many horses that came into town every day. I have an idea that it was a gift of the local businessmen, although it may have come from the town. In any case, it was much used. Rarely would a farmer, or anyone else, driving his horse pass by the watering trough without giving his animal a chance to wet his whistle. It may also have been a means of spreading horse diseases, since it was not a bubbling fountain as provided for people, but only a deep trough into which each horse dipped his mouth and nose as far as he liked. But I don't recall any problem of this sort, at least none that was recognized.

Two or three of our commercial contacts were outside the town square. One was the Turner Center creamery, or milk processing plant. It was located about a half mile west on the main street leading to Norway, and was used as a milk plant for many years, up to perhaps about 1940. The building is still there,[34] I think, and has been used at times to house woodworking machinery for the local high school's manual training courses. When used as a milk plant, we delivered milk or cream there frequently, probably 2-3 times per week. After I became 10 or 11 years old, I often had the job of taking the milk to town and picking up groceries and supplies on the way back.

The local feed store (farmers' union coop) was also about a half mile from the square, on a back street to the west. After delivering the milk I would usually swing by the feed store for a sack or two of "grain," as we called it, meaning any feed concentrate such as bran, corn meal, or mixed feed. We normally paid cash for the feed, but would sometimes "charge it" if low on cash.

Local features that came in early with the automobile were the garages and service stations. Ripley & Fletcher's Ford garage must have been established around 1915, and is still there, close to the former Turner Center milk plant. We bought our first car, a 1916 Model T Touring Car, from them. Other dealers that I recall handled Maxwells, Chevrolets, Hudsons, and Velies.

Much earlier the Grand Trunk Railroad had gone through (Portland to Montreal), with a station across from the milk plant. The little-used station building is still there. In 1915-1925 it was quite a busy place with daily passenger service and considerable freight. Also built at an early date was the Oxford County Courthouse and jail on an elevation behind the railroad station. It is still there and hasn't changed in 50 years, to the best of my memory. Cousin Earle Clifford was Registrar there for many years.

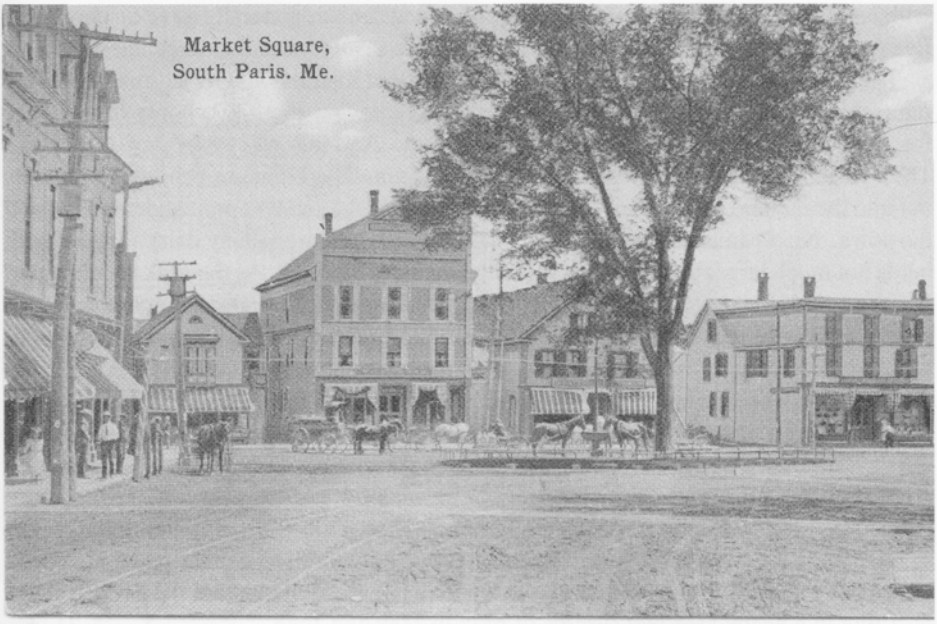


Photo 85A. Market Square, South Paris, ca. 1910. Courtesy of Ben Conant, Paris Cape Historical Society.

LIVESTOCK OPERATIONS
(5/27/74)

Our farm business, like most others in the area at that time, included livestock, mainly a dairy enterprise for cash income, but also poultry and hogs, primarily for home use, and horses for power. We had 10-12 milk cows, plus a bull and young stock, for a total of 15-18 dairy animal units (one animal unit is a mature dairy cow or equivalent in terms of feed consumption). We had a flock of around 40-50 hens, plus a brood sow, and always raised two pigs for meat every year. Earlier, sheep had been kept on the farm, but not in my time, although step-father Will Thomas did have a few in the period 1928-1932.

The livestock were housed as shown in the attached sketch of the barn. Space for hay storage was provided above the animals and in the bay in front of them. Manure sheds were conveniently located behind the stock, and the fattening pigs ran loose in one of the sheds. Among other things they kept the horse manure packed down tight so that it did not heat and spoil.

The dairy enterprise was our stable source of income, with returns coming in every month of the year. These gross returns probably averaged around $100 per month during the relatively high farm prices of World War I. But out of these had to come the direct dairy expenses for grain, etc., which did not leave much net income. But it, combined

with seasonal income from sweet corn, apples, and timber, generally gave us enough to live on at a fairly comfortable level, except for life insurance and emergencies.

The dairy enterprise was also a very heavy user of man labor. Our normal work day ran from perhaps 6 AM to 8 PM, with the cows requiring about two hours of the labor force at both the beginning and the end of the day. And this was every day of the year. The first job in the morning was to shovel the accumulated manure behind the animals out into the manure shed. Then some dry sawdust was scattered around under and behind the cows. Next came milking which we did by hand, although many dairy farmers with herds not much larger than ours had milking machines by 1920. As the milk accumulated it was carried into the shed off the kitchen, depending on the seasonal temperatures, and was then poured into five-gallon cans for hauling to town every other day. In the hot weather these cans of milk were kept cool in an ice water tank in the cellar. After milking, the cows were fed hay, silage, and grain in their stalls. In the Summer after breakfast for the family, the cattle were let out and driven down to the pasture where they spent the day, returning around supper time. In the cold weather they were kept in the barn all day, except for a break of about an hour at noon for exercise and water in the barn yard. The pasture season ran from about May 10 to October 10, although the quantity of feed available from the pasture varied widely from month to month, reaching a peak in late May and early June. The milk flow for the area varied in about the same pattern, resulting in a heavy seasonal surplus of milk in May and June.

On a dairy farm, the manager is under pressure from several different directions. He has to watch the health of the animals and make sure the cows are bred at the proper time. He has to plan and carry out a program of feed crop production and harvesting. He must have a group of replacement heifers coming along or be prepared to buy replacements as the older cows drop out after perhaps 5-8 years of milking. We had problems in all of these areas, of course, and Dad was the decision maker. He worked hard at it, and sometimes had to miss all or part of a family picnic in order to get a heifer bred on time. In Summer this involved observing the heifer in heat in the young stock pasture, catching her with a rope, and leading her to the barnyard where the bull was available and willing. I recall that once in such a situation Aunt Mary had a hard time trying to explain to us curious children what was going on.

Our poultry and hog enterprises were small and primarily for home use. We did sell a few eggs when we had a surplus, and usually had a few young pigs for sale, since we only planned to raise two out of a litter that generally amounted to 6-8. Every Spring we would hatch perhaps 50-60 chicks. This was done in the old fashioned way with mother hens, each of which would be provided with about a dozen eggs in a quiet location, usually in the utility pen at the east end of the main barn. We always had Rhode Island Red chickens, but Mid Cummings' folks had Plymouth Rocks. Many an argument did we have about the relative merits of the two breeds.

Horses were for power and transportation, of course. But they seemed more like members of the family than did the other livestock. They were kept for long periods, up to 15 years or so, often beyond a productive age, for sentimental reasons. I recall how bad we all felt at the untimely death of old Star, of the Star-Stripe team. He was not so very old, but had a bad case of intestinal blockage that the vet could not help.

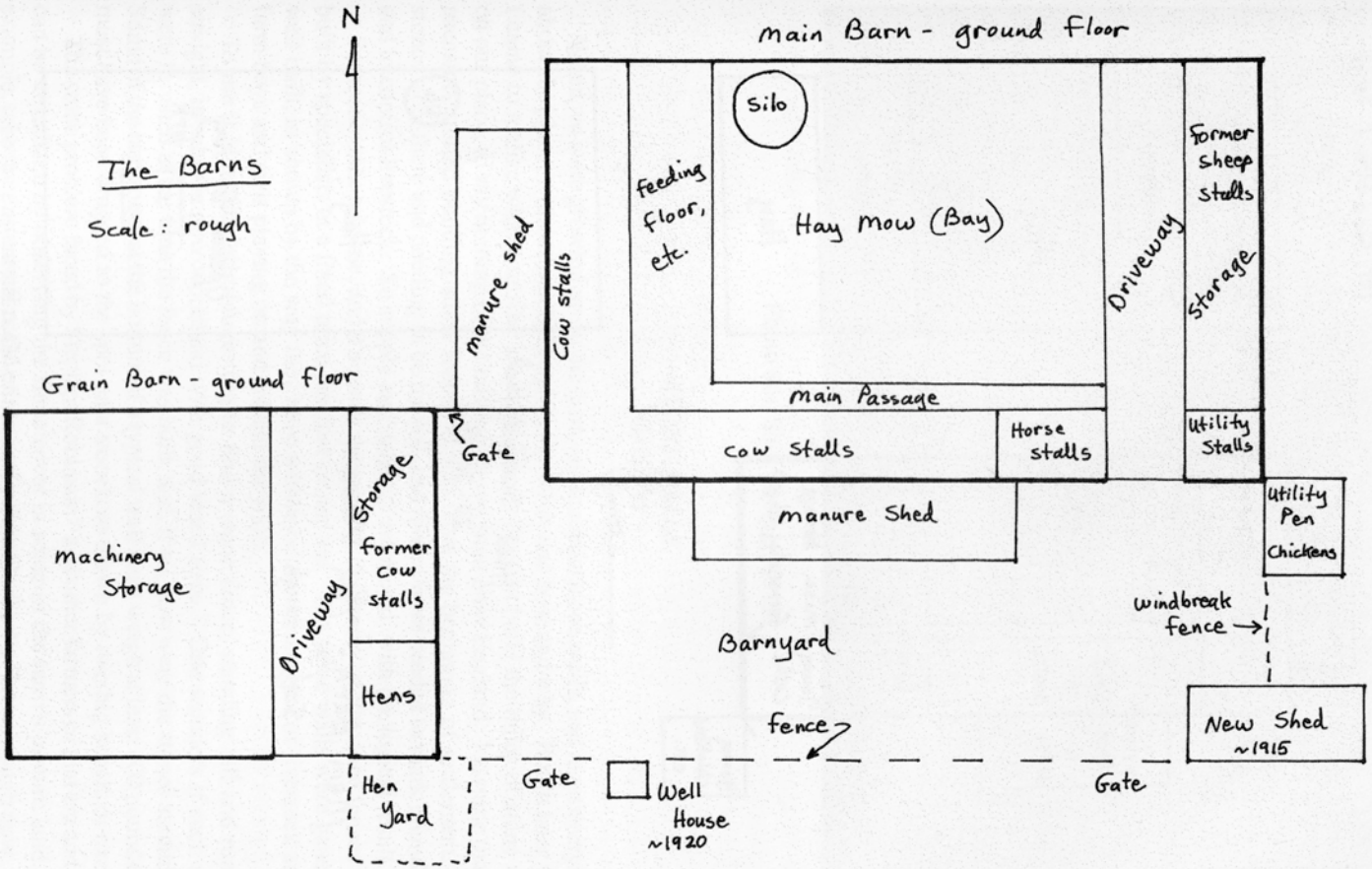
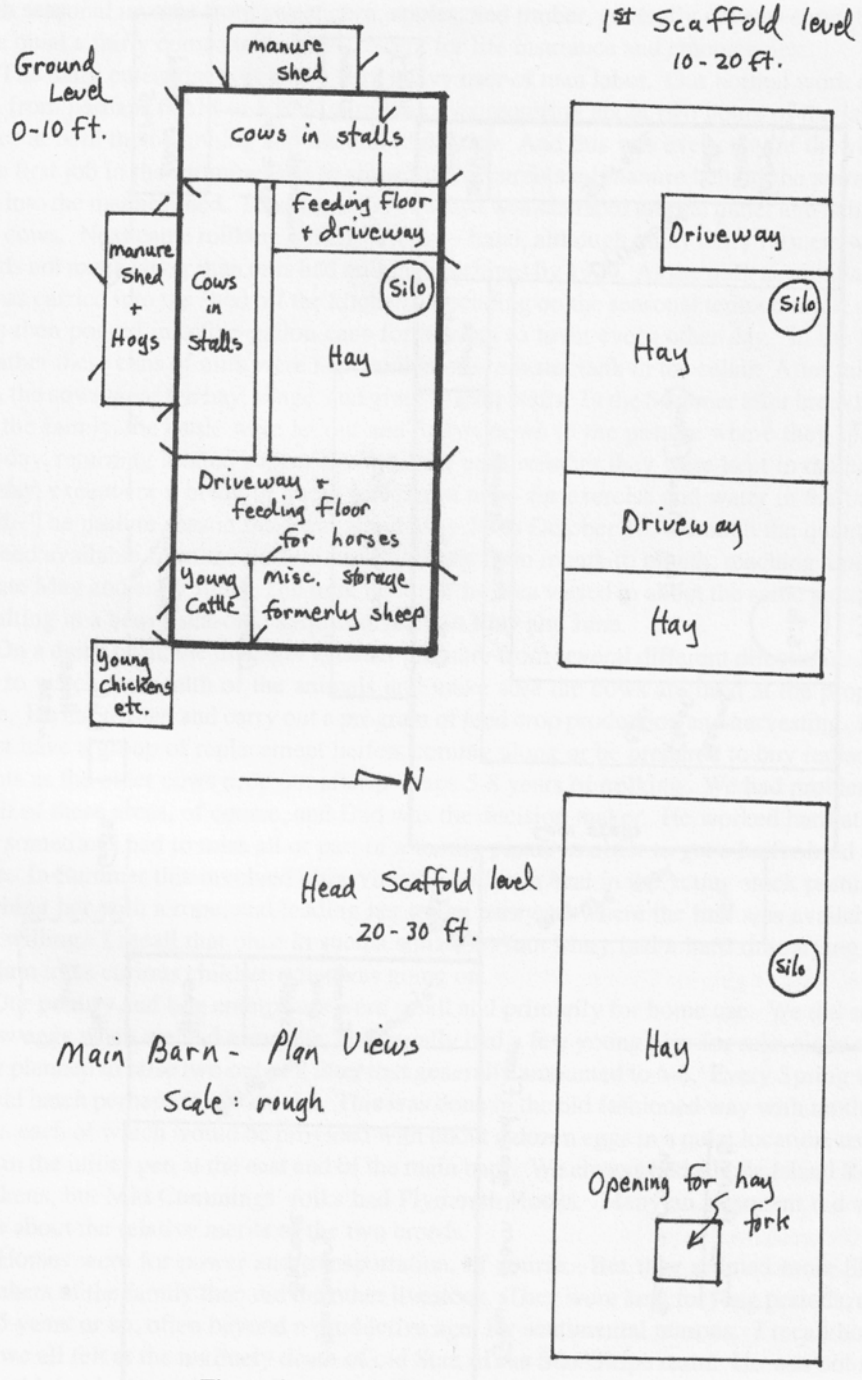


Figure 7. General sketch plan of the barns.



Main Barn - Plan Views
Scale: rough

Figure 8. Sketch plans of the Main Barn.

Photo 86. Shirl and pig, 1919.

STONE WALLS
(6/10/74)

When we were growing up on the farm, we accepted stone walls, and most everything about the place, without much thought as to when and how and why. But in later years I came to realize what a terrific job it must have been to build the miles of stone walls on our place, to say nothing of the mileage throughout New England. I assume that our ancestors started building stone fences almost from the beginning of settlement. The stones were there and needing to be moved, and fences were needed to mark boundaries and to control livestock. So supply and demand interacted, with the logical result.

Someone once told me, and it sounds reasonable, that many of the stone fences were built by specialists at a fixed price per foot or per rod. The stone walls were generally well built, as shown by the way they have withstood the onslaughts of livestock and of farm boys and girls playing on and around the walls.

To me it is particularly interesting to find a stone fence, standing tall and running straight, in what is now woodland with good-sized trees.[35] One wonders if such areas were forested at the time the fence was built, and, if so, how were the stones assembled. Some of the big stones at the bottom of a typical wall must weigh at least 400 pounds, and must have been dragged to the spot on a stoneboat drawn by two big horses or oxen.

The stone problem faced by Stephen Robinson[36] and other farmers of that era and later can be visualized by observing the stone cover in some of the farm's pasture land. For example, take the pasture east of the house where the power line cuts through now. This

pasture probably was never plowed, and is, no doubt, fairly typical of the topography of the land back at the time of settlement. Boulders are so numerous there as to provide stepping stones for long distances. Our ancestors faced a Herculean task in preparing such land for cultivation, and I have often wondered just how they went about it. I suspect that after tree removal, their first crops were planted among the rocks without much attempt to remove them. Later perhaps, as time permitted, rocks were removed and put into stone fences or stone piles so that over a period of years most of the crop land became fairly smooth and relatively rock free.

Even in my time, however, some of the fields were still quite rocky and very difficult to plow and cultivate. For example, the Field Behind the Barn and the 7-Acre Field. In fact, the tendency in my time was to plow only the fields most free of rocks, leaving the others in permanent hay and bushes, gradually going back into trees. With labor becoming relatively more expensive, it was no longer economic in the 1920s to use high labor input in handling rocks. If we needed a fence, it was built of barbed wire, three or four strands stretched tight and nailed to posts spaced quite a distance apart. No stone walls were built in my time, and probably not in my Dad's time. I suspect that most of the stone wall construction in Maine was done well before 1850. We were still picking stones on cropland in 1920, but they were thrown or dumped in stone piles, usually in out-of-the-way pasture places, but sometimes right in the middle of a field, as can still be seen in the South Field in front of the house.

After seeing the smooth, rock-free cropland of New York, Pennsylvania, and states farther west, one wonders why any farmers remained in rockbound New England to fight a never-ending battle against stones. Perhaps New Englanders were not well informed about conditions in areas to the west, although the railroads and other agencies were promoting the West vigorously in the late 1800s. Many people did leave, of course, enough apparently to halt the line of settlement in Maine that had been pushing north and northwest into the big woods. But many, including our ancestors, remained, apparently feeling that, all things considered, Maine was a good alternative. Among other things, it was home.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
(8/18/74)

Our "family" on the farm around 1915 normally consisted of us four kids, our parents, Grandmother Parsons, Uncle John, and sometimes another hired man, and sometimes a hired girl. We all lived in the one house without any "upstairs-downstairs" distinctions. Mother and Dad, with us four kids, had the southwest first floor bedroom, "our room," as a family headquarters. We kids usually slept in it, or nearby in adjacent halls when young, but graduated to upstairs rooms as we got older. Grandmother always slept in the northwest first floor bedroom (now the kitchen), and Uncle John used the northeast second floor bedroom over the Sitting Room. I don't recall the exact room assignments of the second hired man or the hired girl. These arrangements were subject to considerable change when we had Summer visitors or boarders. I remember sleeping in the attic one

Summer. Another Summer Phil and I, and perhaps Shirley, slept in a temporary tent-like structure, with a tarpaulin roof, on the south side of the Ice House.

Room arrangements were also subject to change in time of sickness. For example, when Mother and we four children all had the measles at the same time, we assembled in "our room" to facilitate operations. Our bedrooms normally were not heated, although all had wood-burning stoves for special occasions such as sickness, or childbirth. In those days, births generally took place at home, and this was true with us. We were all born at home, and I believe all in "our room."

Unheated bedrooms were not conducive in the Winter to spending a lot of time dressing and undressing in them. In fact, in cold weather we usually did as much changing as we could in the dining room, which was kept fairly comfortable at all times by the brick "furnace," a homemade boxy affair that would take wood 3-4 feet long. Taking baths was another problem in cold weather. Our schedule for a complete bath in the Winter was about once per month for males, and once per week for females, and this was normally done at bedtime in the kitchen behind the stove with a good fire going in it. We used a wash tub rather than the bath tub, which was fixed in place in a cold bathroom in what is now the northwest corner of the Old Kitchen.

HULLED CORN
(10/29/74)

A great treat for us kids growing up on the farm was an item known as "hulled corn." To us it had no other name, although it could have been called "whole grain hominy" and possibly by other labels. In any case, it was made from whole grain corn by removing the tough outside covering of the kernel. This was done, I believe, by treatment with lye or some such chemical, possibly accompanied by cooking in boiling water. The final product was an attractive mass of skinned kernels with a chewy texture and a pleasant taste. It was usually eaten with milk, much like breakfast cereal, except we normally had it as a main dish for supper.

In my time we never made hulled corn at home, but bought it all prepared from A. I. Twitchell who lived on Fore St. He would drive through our neighborhood with his horse and buggy about once a month, at least in the warmer months. He would generally come by our place late in the afternoon, heading home down the back road by Alvin Lovejoy's. His prices were reasonable, perhaps 25 cents for a quart, and Mother always bought a quart or two, enough for one meal at least.

FEEDING THE ANIMALS
(12/23/74)

Our farming system included substantial numbers of livestock: dairy cattle, horses, chickens, and hogs, along with a few cats and dogs. So we had to provide feed for these animals, either by producing it on the farm, or by providing a cash flow to buy the feed. We did some of each, as discussed below.

The dairy cattle were by far our biggest users of feed. We normally had 12-15 cows plus a bull and assorted young dairy animals, a total of around 20 animal units (a. u., usually defined as one dairy cow or the equivalent in terms of feed consumption). For example, a yearling heifer probably would rate as 0.5 animal units, a sheep as 1/7 a.u. Each animal unit would require annually perhaps the following:

hay and hay equivalent of silage	3.0 tons
pasture	? a.u. months
concentrates, about 20% protein	1.5 tons

By 1915-1925, dairy farmers in Maine, and generally throughout most of the northeast region, had found, by trial and error and with the help of the Agricultural Experiment Stations, that the most profitable system was to balance cow numbers and milk production against roughage (hay, silage, and pasture) capacity of the farm, and to purchase most of the feed concentrates required. This was our system. We planned to produce enough roughage for our animals, but bought all of the concentrate except for a few hundred bushels of oats which went mainly to the horses.

So far as the dairy cattle were concerned, the feeding year broke down naturally into two seasons: the pasture season, basically May-Sept., and the barn-feeding season, which was the rest of the year. The pasture season was a happy one, particularly the May-June portion when the permanent pastures were lush so that the cows would usually produce quite well with only a low rate of supplementary feeding. This reduced labor requirements as well as cash expenses for feed, and meant seasonally low costs and high net income, even though the farm price of milk was always seasonally low in those months.

Starting with hot weather, usually in July, the pastures became less productive and more supplementary feeding was required for the milking herd until a full barn-feeding schedule was reached sometime in late Sept. or early October. The hay fields were usually pastured in September and early October, as much as practical. This practice was limited somewhat by lack of adequate fences to keep the cows where we wanted them. Electric fences had not been invented yet.

The above applied to the milking herd. In addition, the young stock and dry cows were also pastured, normally in the Horse Pasture. These animals, of course, were not brought to the barn every evening for milking, and they tended to become wild as the Summer advanced. We tried to prevent this by visiting them every week or so, usually on Sunday, with salt in hand like the Three Wise Men.

The barn-feeding season meant that we had to handle again, but over a longer period, all of the hay and silage that we had harvested frantically during the Summer. Hay was fed twice a day (normally at milking time). Silage was fed once a day, after the evening milking to avoid silage taste in the milk. Once a day, usually in the late afternoon, we had to climb into the hay mow and into the silo to pitch down to the barn floor enough for one day's feeding. I often helped with this chore, which was sort of a ghostly experience by the dim light of the single kerosene lantern hung on a convenient nail. It

probably was a bit dangerous carrying a lighted lantern into the hay mow, but we never gave it a thought.

A special sort of barn feeding that we used every year was a practice called by various names, such as "green chop," "soiling crop," etc. In our case it was always one acre or so of Japanese millet seeded in the Spring in the field behind the barn and harvested a little at a time each evening in late Summer for the milking herd. Dad would cut (with a hand scythe) enough each time to make a big wheelbarrow load which he pushed to the barn. This was hard work at the end of a 12-14 hour day, but he believed that it helped to maintain milk production when the pastures were relatively unproductive. Another source of feed, available for only a few weeks in September (the canning season) was "waste" from the "corn shop" in town. This was the husks and cobs from the sweet corn brought in to be canned, and farmers who delivered corn to the plant would take back the waste. It made good livestock feed either fresh or in the silo.

Along with feeding the livestock was the need to protect them from the weather. Actually this was not a big problem, and was accomplished mainly by a barn providing shelter from rain and snow and from the extremes of temperature. Our barn, like most, had no heat, except for the body heat of the animals, but even in the coldest weather the temperature of the cattle stable rarely dropped below freezing and the cattle seemed to be comfortable. They may have grown extra thick hair for the Winter season. The horses and poultry likewise had to depend on their own body heat except if the horses were out in bad weather they generally were covered with a blanket, at least while standing still. I recall that Dad and I once went to a basketball game in Norway in a miserable blizzard. While watching the game we left the horse on a side street fully exposed to the storm. We did put a blanket on him and he waited patiently some two hours for us. He sure was glad to head for home and we made good time getting there.

The hogs got a special break in cold weather. They were kept in the manure shed on the south side of the main barn where they could enjoy the heat developed by the horse manure. This was a reciprocal deal, however, since they kept the horse manure packed down so that it would not overheat and spoil as it might have otherwise.

FEEDING THE FAMILY
(12/74)

Feeding the family, like feeding the animals, was a year-round job. Likewise, it also depended on purchased food along with home-grown items. We were self sufficient in dairy products, poultry products, and several other items such as apples, potatoes, dry beans, and maple sirup. We were perhaps one third self sufficient in red meat, but the limiting factor here was mainly one of suitable preservation and storage. Home freezers and freezer lockers had not been developed, so we had to depend on freezing weather or canning to preserve meat. The cold weather normally was adequate during Dec. 15-March 15, and well-cured hams would extend the season by several months. But for about eight months of the year we depended largely on purchased meat and fish, except

for a small amount of canned product. For some reason, Mother did not can much meat. Perhaps she was afraid of spoilage since we had no pressure cooker for canning, but only a wash boiler. This was used for all of our canning, mainly peas, snap beans, sweet corn, tomatoes, and wild berries.

Our major purchased food items, aside from meat, were flour, sugar, cereals, coffee, spices, and small quantities of miscellaneous products such as oranges, bananas, and sometimes candy.[37] We would buy a barrel of flour every Fall and a 100-pound bag of sugar several times a year. Our apples and potatoes would keep alright in the cellar without freezing if the house was well banked with boughs and snow, as it always was in the Winter.

As the above would suggest, our diet was heavy on meat, potatoes and gravy, and this was true throughout the year. We usually had meat or fish and potatoes, plus pie or cake and milk or coffee for at least two meals each day. We frequently had fresh (in season) or canned vegetables and home-made bread and applesauce nearly every meal, except for a few months when apples were out of season. Sadly lacking most of the time were citrus fruits and the leafy vegetables, such as lettuce and spinach. I'm sure we suffered some vitamin deficiencies, as evidenced by teeth problems. In 1920, most adults had false teeth by age 35-40.[38]

Except for wild berries, we did not do much collecting of wild plant food. We did sometimes harvest a few dandelion greens and we always picked up what butternuts we could find conveniently. We did harvest, or try to harvest, wild animal food such as deer, grouse, rabbits, and squirrels. But it would have been slim pickings if we had tried to depend on wildlife for a major share of our food. I recall that Aunt Annie often urged us to make more use of wild things. In fact, at our 1920 memorial dinner (celebrated on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of Maine's statehood) she insisted on having wild black cherry cobbler for dessert. We kids harvested enough cherries from a tree in the old Sheep Pasture, and Mother did her best to incorporate them into a cobbler. It was edible, but not a howling success. This was the first and last time we ever had that dish.

Our diets were influenced by certain customs or notions about proper eating. For example, we always had baked beans for Saturday night supper, and had them warmed over for breakfast on Sunday morning. Any family that failed to follow this plan was regarded as a bit strange, and was not fully accepted in local society. Another must, almost as firm, was fried potatoes every day for breakfast.

HORSES
(3/13/75)

In 1915-1925, horses were still the main source of draw-bar power on our place, and on most other farms of the area. Tractors were starting to come in, along with motor trucks, but we had neither. By 1920 we did have a six-horsepower Sears and Roebuck gasoline engine for sawing firewood, filling silo, and threshing oats. In my earliest memory we had a windmill for pumping water and by 1916 had a Model T Touring Car, mainly for hauling people, but also for use in taking milk to town and for similar light hauling. But

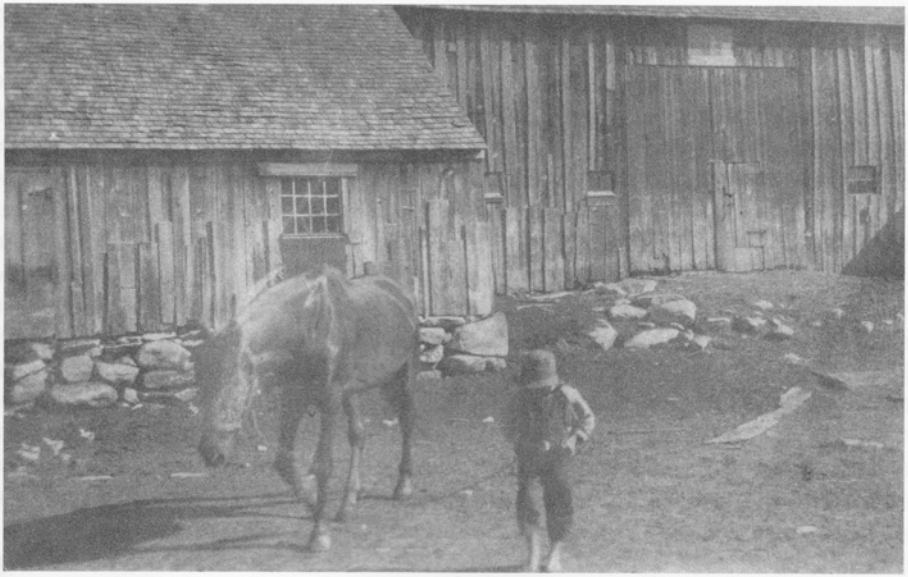


Photo 87. Shirl (aged 6) and horse in front of the Main Barn, 1920.

for all the heavy draw-bar work in the fields, in the woods, and taking produce to town, we depended on horses.

And so horses were an accepted part of our farm life. We kids were driving and riding horses at the tender age of about 8-10, and thought nothing of it. Neither did we give much thought to the source of our horses or their training. They were bought from local dealers or from other farmers, much as tractors are now. Normally they were quite well trained and teams matched by the time they got to us. Later I learned that in my youth most farm horses in New England were produced in the Midwest and Great Plains regions of the U.S. Presumably they were trained there also, although it is possible that additional training, along with matching of teams, was done by some local dealers.

We usually kept three horses, a team of two heavy animals weighing perhaps 1500 pounds each, and a lighter (about 1000 pounds) driving horse. The latter was used mainly for trips to town with the milk or other light loads, bringing home groceries, etc. on the return trip. The team was used for all heavy draft work such as tilling the soil, hauling timber, breaking Winter roads, etc. All of our horses had names. Our first driving horse that I recall was called "Rosie," and was replaced when old by "Rocket." The earliest team in my memory were "Prince" and "Paddy," later replaced by "Star" and "Stripe" in about 1918. Then Star was replaced by "Taps" about 1920. Replacing an old horse was a sad thing.

When driving a horse, control was exercised by a combination of signals, some vocal and some non-vocal. The former consisted mainly of "giddap" or something similar for "go ahead," and "whoa" for stop. "Giddap" was often accompanied by a smacking, or

sort of kissing sound with the lips, and by a gentle slapping of the horse's rump with the reins. "Whoa" was usually supplemented by pulling back on the reins until they were tight. Direction was controlled mainly with the reins, although some horses were trained to respond to a vocal "gee" or "haw," one meaning turn right and the other turn left. Speed control was a more subtle thing. Increase in speed, say from walking to a trot, was signaled by a more emphatic use of "giddap" and rein slapping, plus sometimes a light touch of the buggy whip. Speed control was often difficult and different horses responded differently, particularly when an increase in speed was desired by the driver. Sometimes it was almost impossible to stimulate more speed in a lazy horse or in one that was old and creaky. Reduction in speed was usually accomplished easily by a decline in the "go ahead" signals, plus a tightening of the reins. Of course, we did not expect the heavy horses to do much more than fast walking most of the time. And they would always walk fastest on the way home. They knew where the comfort was.

Actually, driving a horse or team was not as difficult as it may sound. Once on the road, the driver could relax and let the horse or team proceed without much guidance until a point of decision was reached. It was much easier than driving an auto, and safer too.[39]

A horse could be thought of as a flexible power unit that could be attached to a variety of vehicles, pieces of equipment, etc. This was accomplished by a suitable harness for the horse, designed to match certain points of attachment on the vehicle and equipment. For the work horses we really had two types of harness, one designed for heavy jobs, such as tillage operations, and the other for lighter jobs, such as taking the milk to town. For the driving horse, the lighter type of harness was all that was needed. This consisted of three items. First, a head piece which included a set of blinders to reduce side vision of things that might frighten the horse. It also included a bit, a metal rod about six inches long that fitted into the mouth, and to the ends of which the reins were attached. The next item was a "breast plate," a heavy circular leather strap that fitted around the neck and against the animal's shoulders, with two long straps running back to a whiffle-tree, or other point of attachment for the wagon or whatever had to be pulled.

The third item was a combination affair with a girth that was drawn tight around the horse's midriff and a leather strap that fitted around the lower rump with straps on either side running forward to connect with the shafts of the wagon being pulled. This enabled the horse to back up the wagon by simply backing up against the harness. The heavy harness for the work horses was basically similar but beefed up for strength and with items two and three combined. Furthermore, instead of a breast plate, it included a heavy "horse collar" that fitted around the neck and against the horse's shoulder. Then the harness was clamped onto the collar by a set of "hames."

FERTILIZER
(5/4/75)

By 1915, and probably much earlier, the use of commercial fertilizer was well established on our farm and in the area. It was used mainly on the inter-tilled crops such as

corn, potatoes, and beans. For these crops we used a "complete" fertilizer with a three-element formula like 5-10-5 at rates of perhaps 500-700 pounds per acre. In the case of potatoes, a higher percent of potash was recommended, perhaps 5-10-10. We also applied fertilizer on apples, mainly nitrate of soda (from Chile) to meet the high nitrogen requirements. Fertilizer was rarely used directly on oats or hay crops, but of course these crops received a carry-over effect from applications earlier in the rotation.

Along with commercial fertilizer, we continued to use animal manure which was still regarded as a precious material and necessary for the long-term maintenance of soil fertility. We applied it mainly on the corn crop at the heavy rate of about 20 loads (tons) per acre. Farmers had learned, however, that manure alone was not enough for top yields. They knew that it was low in basic fertility elements (about 1-1-1), but felt it helped soil structure by adding organic matter. This was probably true. But with rising labor costs, handling manure by hand has become more and more expensive in relation to benefits. And so, the trend has been either toward more mechanization of manure handling or toward treating it as an item to be disposed of as cheaply as possible without much regard to its use as fertilizer.

Another fertility practice that was discussed widely as a source of organic matter, and used some by 1925, was green manure, the plowing down of a crop, such as rye, grown separately for that purpose, and sometimes called a "cover crop." We did not make much use of this practice. Why, I am not sure, but we apparently were not convinced of its value.

SEED FOR THE FARM
(5/7/75)

Sizable quantities of seeds were required each year for our style of farming. Some of this was home grown, but much of it was purchased. The home-grown items usually included oats, sweet corn, potatoes, and beans. Purchased seeds were silage corn, grass seed, and most of the garden crops.

The home-grown seeds required storage, of course. For oats, seed was simply taken from the supply for feeding stored in the east end of the main barn close to the horses. Sweet corn was hung by the husks to cure on long horizontal poles in the north end of the shed chamber. Potatoes were kept in the root cellar to prevent freezing. Beans were stored in bags or chests in the same room as the sweet corn.

In growing corn, we had the problem of preventing crows from digging out and eating the newly planted seed. The solution was to coat the seed with tar, or something else, to make it unpalatable.

Among the purchased seeds, grass seed was the major item. We normally used three varieties: timothy (herds' grass), red top, and red clover.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS
(12/18/75, 1/9/78)

Christmas was one of the big events of the year. It meant a lot of fun for the kids and a lot of effort and expense for the parents, even as today. We always had a white Christmas and a long Xmas vacation (about two weeks) from school. We boys were expected to help some in the woods work underway at the time, but Dad was understanding and allowed us plenty of time for recreation.

Christmas was mainly a family affair, sometimes with sliding or skating parties for the neighborhood kids, if conditions were favorable. The focus, however, was the Xmas tree and the gifts that went with it. Even as now, the kids at least were more concerned with the gifts than they were with the religious aspects of the period. I recall that Grandma Parsons, who was a faithful bible reader, sometimes tried at Christmas time to get the family more interested in the bible. But I suspect that we were not too responsive to her efforts, noble as they were. We were busy with our new toys and games. Mother and Dad probably were more concerned with the mundane problems of feeding the family and putting aside enough cash to pay the hired man at the end of the month.

The only possible dampers, which did not occur very often, were economic (a poor year for farm income) and illness in the family. The Xmas season, as now, started several weeks in advance with planning and with activities to procure the gifts and other requirements. A few days in advance we would bring a suitable tree in from the woods, usually a spruce or fir some 8-10 feet high. It was nearly always too tall when brought in from the woods, and would require some pruning before it would fit into the house. It was then installed in the "sitting room," the room in the northeast corner of the main house. Decorations included candles which could be lit as desired, but which were a bit dangerous. Other decorations sometimes included strings of popcorn and other strings of white to give a snowy impression. Finally, the gifts, suitably wrapped, would be placed under or on the tree, to be presented on Christmas eve or Christmas day. After that came a period of enjoying our gifts, playing the new games included, eating Christmas candy, etc.

A big event of the Xmas season was the arrival of Aunt Annie's box. This was always a big carton filled with gifts for the South Paris segment of the Parsons clan, and was an annual event starting about 1900 and continuing at least into the 1920s.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, CHURCHES, AND CLUBS
(12/18/75)

The meaningful unit of local government in most of Maine has always been the town (such as the town of Paris), operating, of course, within a broad framework of state and federal law and subject to specific guidelines on the use of certain funds handed down from state and federal levels. Once a year, usually late in March, most Maine towns of any importance would have a citizens' town meeting. This was "democracy in action," but has been largely replaced in recent years by the town manager form of government. Its principal job was to allocate available funds to the various functions for which the town

had full or partial responsibility, including the operation of schools, road maintenance, and the like. This was done by a series of motions, properly made, discussed, and voted on by those in attendance.

A local lawyer named Walter Grey usually served as moderator or chairman of the Paris town meeting, and every citizen who wished could have his say. As always in a group, some individuals were very active in the discussions, while others were content to listen and vote. I believe that most of the Parsons clan fell into the latter group. I recall that one of our neighbors, Henry Judd, was an active speaker, generally in a conservative vein supporting the small farmers' fear and dislike of rising property taxes. I expect that most of the Parsons clan were in basic agreement with him on this, although I'm sure that Dad was less conservative than many. As for the ladies, they could attend and a few did, but I don't believe they could vote prior to the U.S. constitutional amendment on women's sufferance that was approved in the 1920s.

To the best of my knowledge, personal wealth and prestige did not play any major role in the running of our town. There may have been influences, however, that were not obvious to me at the time. If they had been important, I expect they would have been discussed with us by our parents. I have an idea that Catholics, who were a small minority, were regarded with some suspicion by the Protestants. I doubt, for example, that a Catholic could have been elected to a local job of any importance. Except for this general effect, I was not conscious of any great influence of the churches on the social and political affairs of the community. If this really was the case, it could perhaps be explained by the small Catholic minority plus the fragmentation of the Protestants into numerous small, weak, competing congregations. Our town had at least five Protestant denominations, each with a membership, I suspect, of less than 200, and each feeling, no doubt, that it was the chosen church.

Another grouping of our people was evident in the women's clubs. The leader was the Seneca club, which had the "best ladies" in town as members. Aunt Mary was a member, and I recall her speaking of the club from time to time. They met about once a month, I believe, often with a program put on by members. On one occasion, during World War I, the program dealt with war subjects, and Aunt Mary wrote and delivered a paper on "German Strategy." She read it ahead of time to some of us as a sort of preview. It was a fantastic thing, worthy of James Bond, except that there was, of course, no sex in it. But Aunt Mary took it very seriously and seemed to feel that she had made a major contribution to our war effort.

MINORITY GROUPS
(1/2/76)

The people of our town were basically WASPS, descendants of western Europeans who came to America in the 1600s and 1700s. But we had a few late comers, minority groups, notably the Finns, or Finnlanders as we called them. They were all farmers and tended to settle in the less productive areas back in the hills where land was cheap, but the economic opportunity limited. They were industrious and thrifty, however, noted

for scratching a living out of rough and rocky land that the typical WASP would regard with despair.

The Finns were generally "good people," even if a bit clannish. Uncle Wallace Clifford sold farm machinery to them, and claimed that they spoke perfect English until the time came for a payment on account. Then they had great trouble understanding him. I saw some of this in driving him around the countryside while we were living at the Clifford house in 1924-1925. Phil inherited the job after I left for college in 1925, and the story is told that on one such trip Phil made a great impression on a Finnish girl (and her family) by his enthusiastic eating of some food which she provided. Apparently among the Finns this was considered to be a first step in serious courtship. But Phil didn't know this, and was only reacting to food in his usual way.

We probably had a sampling of other minority groups. We must have had a few French Canadians who migrated from Quebec into northern Maine and then south into our area. We had no Negroes at all. In fact, I never saw a Black person, except in the movies, until I was in high school.

THE SHEEP BARN
(1/6/76)

No sheep were kept on the farm during my time (Will Thomas had a few in 1930-1935), but had been earlier, probably throughout most of the 1800s. They disappeared from our area due to economic pressures from the western U.S., where sheep could be handled at

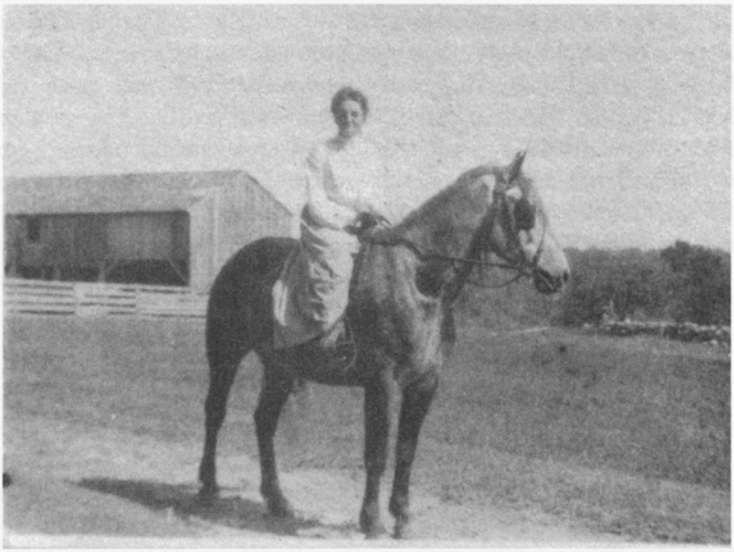


Photo 88. The Sheep Barn (behind rider), ca. 1900. The unknown rider was probably a lady friend of Oscar's.

much lower cost. Along with this, the dairy farming alternative became relatively more attractive with expanding local (Boston and Portland) markets for fresh milk. And so sheep left New England, chased out, not by dogs as some believed, but by sheep in the West and by the dairy cows in the Northeast.

In my early years on the farm, the east side of our barnyard complex was occupied by the sheep barn. This was a rectangular two-story building, perhaps 20 × 40 feet in area, with pens for sheep and room for hay storage. It likely was built in the early 1800s. It may have been well designed for sheep, but not for anything that we were doing, or had in prospect, around 1910. And so it was torn down, probably about 1912—I can barely recall the event. Most of the foundation stones were left in place and can, I believe, be seen to this day just north of the area once occupied by the "new shed" [Machine Shed], a storage building for farm machinery put up about 1915 and torn down about 1965.

FARM MACHINERY
(1/6/76)

By 1915, farming in Maine had achieved a considerable degree of mechanization. But it was mainly what could be called "horse power mechanization." In other words, most of the power was supplied by work animals and by men, rather than by tractors, trucks, and other applications of the internal combustion engine as seen later. For example, we had fairly effective horse-powered machines for cutting and raking hay, and for getting it from the field into the hay mow in the barn. The horse-drawn mover and rake must have been developed between 1860 and 1900. The writings of C. A. Stephens indicate no such machines in use in 1860-1870, but they were in widespread use by 1910-1915 and highly dependable. The mower had a cutterbar enclosing a set of knives that moved rapidly back and forth driven by gearing and a shaft from the wheels. It had both hand and foot levers for raising the cutterbar to clear stones and other obstacles in the field. It came in two sizes, a one-horse version with a cutterbar about three feet long, and a two-horse version with a 5-6 foot cut. It was a good machine and not greatly different from those made today [tractor drawn]. The horse-drawn hay rake was a set of two wheels with about eight feet of metal teeth mounted on a frame that separated the wheels. It was usually drawn by one horse and had seat for the operator in the middle of the frame, along with two foot pedals that allowed the operator to control the raking and dumping operations.

The hay tedder was essentially a set of hay forks mounted on a frame and geared to the wheels so that the forks would lift, shake, turn and throw back hay that had been cut and was drying in the field. It was most useful on heavy hay that would only dry slowly as left by the mowing machine.

Along with harvesting machinery, we had quite an inventory of horse-drawn tillage machines, including plows, harrows, cultivators, etc. We also had special hand tools for certain jobs: the hoe for hand hoeing intertilled crops such as corn and beans, and the potato digger which was shaped like a hoe but had long teeth instead of a hoe blade. We even had a flail for threshing beans and oats.

BLACKSMITHING
(1/6/76)

Blacksmith shops were almost as numerous as auto repair shops are today. South Paris had two blacksmiths, one in Pooduck, near the current Cornwall buildings, and another up near the railroad station. These were both one-man shops, and they were often so busy that customers had a long wait. I don't know how the smiths acquired their skills. Probably by some sort of apprenticeship. They were expected not only to shoe horses (and a few oxen), but also to do a variety of iron work such as replacing the metal tires on wagon wheels.

Shoeing horses was a job that had to be repeated every few months, the exact interval varying with amount and conditions of use. Icy Winter roads required more frequent shoeing, although often it consisted only of removing, sharpening, and replacing the existing shoe to prevent slipping.

A blacksmith shop was an interesting place for youngsters. It had an aroma all of its own, a mixture of horsy smells, burning coal, hot iron, etc.

BREAD AND MILK MEALS
(1/6/76)

A favorite dish for Sunday night supper on the farm was bread (or crackers) and milk, often accompanied by dried salt codfish. I don't know the origin or background of the dish, but no doubt it developed early in Maine history as a fairly tasty, low cost, light meal. Uncle Wallace Clifford was a leading exponent and recommended it highly for most any meal. I don't believe it was as firmly established a custom in Maine as baked beans on Saturday night, but it had a following.[40]

THE COUNTY FAIR
(5/19/76)

An annual event of much interest during my childhood was the Oxford County Fair. It was held for 3-4 days in September, on the site now occupied by the Oxford Hills High School, about half way between the business centers of Norway and South Paris. It was sponsored, I believe, by the Oxford County Agricultural Association. The emphasis was on exhibits of locally grown farm crops and livestock, but it also included the usual midway items such as hot dog stands, Ferris Wheel, etc., plus a daily schedule of horse racing (harness style) and sometimes fireworks in the evening. All in all it was an exciting thing for both children and adults, and we always spent at least one day at the fair. I don't recall the admission fee, but no doubt it was reasonable.

My folks did not usually exhibit anything at the fair. They probably figured it was too much effort for the slight return possible. I seem to recall entering some popcorn that I had grown one year, but I don't recall the results. One of our neighbors, Arthur

Cummings on Fore Street, always had an exhibit of his purebred Holstein dairy cattle, and took many prizes. He often took them to other fairs also.

For several years, beginning perhaps about 1920, the fair included an airplane (a biplane, probably left over from World War I) that carried passengers for a short ride and a large fee. It also did some stunts, such as looping the loop at scheduled times during the day.

WHEN THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN
(5/19/76)

Nearly every Summer while I was growing up on the farm, a circus would come to town, generally for a 1-day stand under canvas at the County Fair grounds or at some other suitable site. These were not the 3-ring Barnum & Bailey types, but were smaller editions, lacking the size and diversity of the better-known shows, but including many of the same features. One of them, whose name I recall, was the "Sells Floto" circus. Another had "Clyde Beatty" somewhere in its name.

Cost of admission to these circuses was modest. The main event was perhaps 50 cents for adults and less for children, with additional fees for the so-called side shows which included such things as the "fire eater" and "the man with three legs." The animal exhibit was also often an extra change. For economic reasons, we usually skipped these side lines. In fact, I recall one year, probably a bad year for farming in the 1914-1915 period, when we were too poor to attend the circus at all.

A colorful feature of the circus was a parade through town, normally during the morning of circus day. This included some of the animals in suitable mobile cages, and perhaps some of the human performers as well. Most obvious, however, was the steam calliope, a sort of pipe organ on wheels with a boiler to provide the steam for snappy tunes as the parade went through town. I believe it was drawn by horses as were most, if not all, of the other units of the parade.

Sometimes we also were able to watch the circus setting up. This was quite an event, especially if the grounds were muddy and soft, as they often were. I recall watching one of the circuses setting up in a muddy field near Lewiston. This must have been around 1920. We drove to the site in our Model T and found the circus running late due to the mud. The big horse-drawn wagons with heavy loads were getting bogged down badly and the only solution was to bring up the elephants (two to a wagon) to push from the rear while the horses pulled from the front. This was effective, but slow, and the opening was delayed by several hours. We finally saw the show, but were a bit late in getting back to the farm for the evening chores.

At least one of the circuses had a fun piece of action put on for the amusement of the audience before the main show started. A sexy looking female employed by the circus would come into the tent and would approach men accompanied by women. She would extend a shapely leg toward the man, and ask him to tie her loose shoe lace. This he would generally do, giving the gal a chance to make a few borderline comments and perhaps a seductive movement or two. By this time the man's wife would be reacting, perhaps with

amusement but more likely with a degree of annoyance. And, of course, the audience would be laughing and the sexy female would be looking for another customer.

For a year or two we also had a Wild West show. It was organized around 1920 by a Texan named Dallas Benson. He married a local woman, Agnes Fuller, from East Oxford, who also liked horses, and they hired a few local cowboys to perform. One of these was Forrest Thomas,[41] son of our step-father Will Thomas. Forrest was a happy-go-lucky fellow who had a lot of free spirit and no fixed address. The Wild West show was not a financial success and faded away after a brief existence.

THE CHAUTAUGUA
(5/21/76)

For many years, beginning perhaps around 1910, the Chautaugua was an important feature of our Summer life. It was a traveling show, a bit like the circus, but generally spent several days at each stop. It consisted mainly of educational programs based on lectures and music. It became sort of the "in place" and was supported by the "best" people. I never cared too much for the programs, but went occasionally after I became old enough. It, like the circus, faded with changing technology, particularly radio and television, and to the best of my knowledge has completely disappeared.

THANKSGIVING
(1/9/78)

Thanksgiving was quite a big day on the farm, celebrated mainly by lots of food, some of it special to the day. We always had chicken pie for breakfast, followed by roast chicken with fixings, plus several kinds of pie, for dinner (the noon meal). For supper (the evening meal) it was leftovers if anyone felt like eating. During the morning the available men and boys would keep busy on odd jobs around the buildings, such as banking the house with evergreen limbs (to catch and hold the snow as it came later). Another job reserved for the day was installing a wind break at the western big door at the back of the cow barn. This was done by stuffing hay into a space about 10 inches thick made by the barn door on the outside and boards nailed to the timbers on the inside. The object was to keep the cows a bit warmer, and also the men who did the chores.

Thanksgiving was also the day that we counted on as the first day of ice skating, and we often did, at least on the ice pond and other shallow waters where a break-through would not be too serious.

I don't recall that Thanksgiving Day had any special religious significance to us. We knew the story of the pilgrims, of course, (it was in the history books), but that seemed long ago and far away.

DAILY ROUTINE FOR MEN AND BOYS ON THE FARM
(2/20/78)

This schedule applied pretty much every day, year-round, except for Sundays when the 8-12 AM and 1-5:30 PM work periods were used mainly for rest and relaxation. School kids also had a modified schedule Monday-Friday when school was in session, being away from home between 8 AM and 5 PM, in school and traveling back and forth. Farm women also put in a long day doing housework, but without the help of electricity and all the related gadgets that are available today.

5:45 AM	Out of bed, dress, etc. Build or replenish fires in kitchen and dining room.
6:00 AM	Barn chores—clean out manure, feed cows, milk, etc.
7:00 AM	Breakfast, put milk away
8:00 AM	Out-of-doors work, crops in Summer, woods in Winter. Haul logs, etc. to town; two trips daily in good weather. Haul firewood to door yard.
11:45 AM	Turn cows out for water in barnyard
12:00 NOON	Dinner
1:00 PM	Out-of-doors work, varying with seasons
5:30 PM	Supper and relaxing
7:00 PM	Barn chores, milk and feed cows
8:30 PM	Reading, studying
9:30 PM	To bed

NEIGHBORS
(4/12/80)

Our neighbors were mostly good solid citizens, some more solid than others as indicated by income and level of living. They were primarily farmers, operating and generally living on small family farms and often swapping work among themselves as dictated by supply and demand. Their farms normally included more woodland than crop land, providing fuel wood and various timber items for use and sale.

Our closest neighbors were Freel [Freeland] and Alice Cummings and family; Lee Dudley and his mother, Alvin Lovejoy, and his wife Mame; and Charles Swett and family. A bit farther away on the East Oxford Road were the Judds and the Cliffords, and sometimes the Wallace Ripleys. This group would meet in the Winter about once per month for an evening Rook session, followed by some refreshment served by the hostess of the evening, with the end at around 11 PM.

Mid Cummings, son of Freel and Alice Cummings, was my chief playmate in the neighborhood. As young teenagers we got together frequently for an hour or two to play and sometimes for a bit of farm work to help our parents. As Mid and I grew older and bigger, we gradually took on more mature roles, and we were capable of doing a man's work by age 16 or so. Freel and Mid had only a small farm operation and worked out much of the time, mainly in cultivating and harvesting crops for other farmers. They bought their first car (a Model T) about 1917 or 1918 which enabled them to travel more widely for employment. They were good neighbors and helped us greatly when we needed help, such as in times of sickness, like when some of us had measles or the flu all at once. I'm sure they were what grandma had in mind when she spoke of "calling in the neighbors."

Mid and I frequently discussed our futures. We both finished high school in 1924 and had many arguments as to college. He did not want to go, apparently feeling that the returns would not justify the inputs required. I felt otherwise, influenced no doubt by the high attendance and performance records of the Cliffords and a few other local families. I'll never forget a more or less final discussion that Mid and I had on the matter, sitting on a beam in the manure shed. I'm not sure why we chose such a setting, but anyway I went on to college and Mid didn't. But as I made public my excellent records in the early months of college, Freel and Alice Cummings were just as proud of me as if I was their own son. They even sent me a bushel of fine apples.

Freel and Alice were quite active in the Grange, a farm organization of some standing in Maine at that time. Over the years Freel held all of the offices in the local chapter and some at the State level. Mother and Dad were not active in the Grange, feeling that it took too much time away from farm work. But Dad could always find time to attend local baseball and football games—a question of priorities, I guess.

Across the valley to the east of our farm was the Swett place, occupied in my time by Charles Swett and his wife, with four children (Lydia, Henry, Ed, and Oliver), almost the same ages as we were. We were good friends, but for some reason did not visit back and forth as much as with the Cummings family. Perhaps it was due to the rather rough language used by Charles and his boys. But they were good workers and had a lot of mechanical ability, something always needed on a farm. The Swetts, like many farm families, usually had a relative or two living with them, sort of a nursing home situation. This put quite a burden on the family, but generally worked out fairly well, depending on the health and temperament of the relatives. We had grandmother Mary Parsons for many years, of course, and for most of that time she was able to help with the housework. At intervals we also had mother's stepmother, Edna Rich. She had poor eyesight and we kids used to take advantage of this in various ways, like stealing food off her plate at meal time.

Lee Dudley and his divorced mother lived for several years in the farmhouse just west of the Freel Cummings place. Lee was an adult during most of that time, but often behaved more like a teenager. He liked to play with us kids, and among other things, built a fine box kite and helped us fly it. They moved away around 1925 and the building burned about that time. He used to make moonshine liquor and was arrested at least once

for it. I recall that Mid and I visited him in jail a few hours during one of his "vacation trips." He seemed happy.

The Lovejoys, Alvin and Mame, lived in an old weathered farm house just south of the Freel Cummings place, a small family farm with quite a large woodlot stretching back to the Town farm property. Their farming was mainly flowers, tomato plants, and woodland products. They sold the tomato plants for 25 cents, or so, per dozen. They also used to operate a portable, canvass-covered restaurant at several of the county fairs in the area, with baked beans as the major item on the menu.[42] The lacked income to maintain the place, and their buildings gradually collapsed until by about 1950 there was nothing left but a cellar hole.

The Hudson Knight home farm was located just to the north of our place, with a second unit, mainly pasture and woods, a few miles away south of the Town farm. Occupants included Hudson and wife plus, no doubt, a relative or two. They moved downtown about 1912-14, and closed up the farm except for harvesting hay and woodland products and perhaps a few apples. The fields were gradually taken over by trees and I doubt that any farming, except woods work, was done after about 1925. The Knight farm included perhaps 100 acres of fine woodland, mostly pine, hemlock, and some scattered hardwoods. This was lumbered heavily in about 1924-26 following Hudson's death, but another fine stand has developed since.

The Clifford family, our relatives, were fine people, industrious and active in community affairs. Aunt Apphia, a strong leader, believed passionately in women's rights, including the right to vote. She also was all for prohibition and held office for years in the WTCU (Women's Christian Temperance Union). She was ill for many years with anemia, at a time when there was no adequate treatment. She grew slowly weaker and died in 1923, leaving behind a fine flock of children and grandchildren.

Henry Judd lived with his family on the East Oxford Road, just south of the cemetery corner. The family included five children with about the same age distribution as ours. Henry was a conservative farmer with about 5 cows plus some cash crops such as apples and vegetables, which he sold in Berlin, N.H., taking a load about once per week in season. He always took an active part in Town Meetings, trying mainly to keep property taxes down. Like most farmers he had almost a horror of taxes, particularly of property taxes.

Then there was "Colonel" Eustis and family who regularly spent the Summers during 1915-20 at the old Town Farm, owned at that time by Dr. King of Portland. They were from Dixfield and included the Colonel and his wife, plus a son around my age and two daughters, somewhat older and "deaf and dumb." This meant, I suppose, that they were born with impaired hearing and never learned to talk properly. The Colonel and Dad were great friends, and we did a lot of visiting back and forth. Among other things we supplied them with ice and milk and the Colonel gave us good advice on many subjects, including how to cure earache. This was a common affliction of children in those days, and could be cured, according to the Colonel, by filling a clay pipe with cotton soaked in chloroform and then blowing through the pipe into the child's ear. In any case, it seemed to work, and Mother had great faith in it and in the Colonel. I never did discover how he got his title; maybe it was honorary.

Another neighbor was Charles Stanton who had a farm on Fore Street in the valley, but whose land adjoined ours on the northwest. He was the perfect example of the hard-working, thrifty Yankee, completely honest, yet always trying to drive a hard bargain. In 1923 or 1924 he wanted to rent our Horse Pasture (about 10 acres) for his heifers. He discussed it with Mother, and they agreed on a price of $6 for the season, with the fence to be maintained by him. So much for the first year, but at the start of the next season he told Mother that he could only pay $5 this time. This irritated Mother, and she told him that "if it wasn't worth $6 it wasn't worth anything." So he paid $6, and no doubt his respect for Mother increased in proportion.

This same Charles Stanton made a comment to me once that gave me a new insight into a philosophy of life that guided some of our neighbors. On this occasion, which must have been around 1924, he and I were standing at the edge of the open field (north of our Big Field) where the Hudson Knight farm buildings, then vacant, were located. I don't recall why we were there. Perhaps we had been chasing lost cattle or something of that nature. Anyway, while we were paused for a moment, he looked across the field to the vacant Knight house and remarked, "A lot of comfort has been taken in that house." It was obvious that such "comfort" had his hearty approval. I don't recall that he explained his comment, but I sensed what he meant. He meant that Hudson and family, thrifty people on their small subsistence farm, had a good life based on the satisfaction of producing much of their own food and clothing and on their considerable leisure time which they used to good advantage in reading and perhaps in conversation, particularly beside a cheerful wood fire on those cold Winter days. Looking back at it, I wonder also if Charles may not have felt at that stage that the Knight's way of life was better than the Stanton way, which was a busier, more commercial approach, with less leisure time and more emphasis on cash income and capital accumulation. I wonder.

FARM OPERATIONS AFTER 1922: SHUTTING DOWN (8/13/74)

Dad's unexpected death in Sept. 1922, after an illness of 2-3 weeks, removed from the scene not only our farm manager but also a large share of the labor force. We felt compelled to make some rather drastic adjustments in farming if we kids were to continue going to school, at least through high school. So we started to reduce labor requirements by curtailing our farm operations. Over a period of a few weeks we sold many of our dairy cows, and within a few months had discontinued entirely the sale of milk and cream, keeping only 2-3 cows plus hogs and chickens for home use. I don't recall exactly how we managed during this period of retrenchment. I'm sure we didn't have a regular hired man then. Both Uncle John and Wallace Ripley had left earlier. Some of our neighbors helped with the milking, at least for a few days. And they also helped in the Fall harvest jobs, such as picking the sweet corn in September and the apples in October. I don't believe we filled the silo that Fall, but haying was completed about on schedule in August while Dad was still able to work.

So within a few months we had reduced our livestock operations to a level that we could handle with family labor even with all of us kids in school. But further thinking and action were needed for the crop operations. I don't recall the details of our thinking, but basically it called for very little plowing beyond the small acreage needed for a garden and potatoes for home use, plus forest products, hay, and apples for sale. I do recall that Uncle Ethan from Buckfield spent a few days with us that Fall and plowed an acre or two for us. I don't recall what we planted on this land.

This reduced program of farming required less equipment, particularly for plowing, harrowing, and cultivating, as well as for certain harvesting jobs such as corn silage. The gradual sale of these equipment items, along with sale of livestock and hay, produced considerable cash, if not income, and by the Spring of 1923 we found ourselves in a position to afford a new car. So, the 1916 Model T Ford was turned in on a new 1923 Chevrolet "Touring Car," complete with three speeds forward and one in reverse, all controlled by a floor gear shift and cone clutch that was always slipping. This car probably cost around $400, but was less reliable than the Ford. It had a self-starter, however, which Mother needed and which the Ford had lacked.

One of our biggest problems for a few years following 1922 was getting the haying done. We did rent a few acres to a neighbor to grow sweet corn for canning, but this still left over 50 acres of hay land to harvest. One year we teamed up with neighbor Oscar Leighton for a long, hot Summer of haying. Another year we hired Wallace Clifford and his crew to do much of the job, but this was rather expensive. After a year or two, however, we reduced the size of the problem by abandoning (the 7-Acre Field and part of the Field Behind the Barn) or selling (the 12-Acre Field) some of the hay acreage. This, plus a normal decline in yield per acre as the stands grew older, resulted in a much smaller job that we three boys could handle fairly well in a period of about three weeks. In fact, I recall that one year after I started college in 1925 I took off two weeks from my job at the University of Maine. With good weather and good luck during that period, we nearly finished the haying, leaving brothers Phil and Shirl free for other things the rest of the Summer.

For about eight years starting in 1923 we tried to solve all our problems by taking farm boarders in the Summer. Aunt Annie put on an advertising campaign that brought in all the boarders we could handle (some 6-8 at any one time) for most of the Summer. They were mostly women, office workers from New York City, ranging widely in age. We had a few family groups, including Banks Toby with his sister and parents.[43] Some of these folks were no doubt a bit surprised in 1923 at our somewhat primitive plumbing, but they seemed to take it in stride and to enjoy themselves. The first year turned out so well that we decided to install better plumbing (bathroom with septic field), which was done in the Spring of 1924. After several years, however, Mother decided that the cost-benefit ratio for boarders was not adequate, and gave up.

Fortunately, our family finances were aided by sales of forest products. Due mainly to Mother's good sense, we sold considerable timber during the period 1923-26 when prices were relatively good. In fact, this enabled us to finish paying off the mortgage that had been placed on the farm following grandmother's death in 1918, and thus to avoid the difficult problem of repayments during the depression years of the 1930s.

Photo 89. Families visiting the farm in 1946, the first summer after the war. Kids in front, left to right: Cynthia, Joe, Jim, Jeff, Johnny, Peggy, Jerry; adults in rear, left to right: Bun, Shirl, Phil, Dorothy (Mrs. Phil), Elisabeth (Mrs. Mert). Photo taken by Mert.

In 1926 Mother re-married, and our step-father Will Thomas gradually took over many of the farm decisions and jobs, although he also spent considerable time working off the farm in his trade as a carpenter. He did try out a small sheep enterprise for a few years, but it was a disaster, between the sheep-killing dogs and the low prices for wool and lambs that prevailed in the depression years.

Our major crop in terms of acres for 30 years or so following 1922 was hay, but the yield was low and quality only fair. We fed some to our livestock and sold some, mainly in the field to local farmers who would harvest it with their own crews and equipment.

As for apples, we continued the enterprise with limited and declining crops for perhaps 10 years following 1922. Our management was sketchy and most of the trees were past maturity and depreciating. Finally, nearly all of our Baldwin trees (our major variety) were killed by the extreme cold Winters of the mid-1930s, and that was the end of our apple business for all practical purposes.

As we kids went away to college, starting with me in 1925, our interests broadened and the farm gradually became more a place for vacation than a place to work and produce income. Some farming continued on a limited and declining scale for many years, but the "good old days" were over, never to return. A new era started in the 1940s when our children became old enough to visit and appreciate the old place.

II. Housekeeping at the Clifford Home in South Paris Village

by Mary Clifford Colley

Photo 90. The Clifford family, ca. 1910. Rear, left to right: Anne, Burt, Wallace, Aphia, Mary, Caroline; seated in front, left to right: Wallace, Jr., Earle, Steve.

HOUSEHOLD CHORES
(Feb. 1976)

As a rule, the boys generally did the chores outside the house. Occasionally they would help dry the dishes. But if you have ever been snapped by a wet dish towel, you understand why we girls could get along very well without their help. And I never learned how to milk a cow, but I could harness a horse.

The chores I remember were the washing and ironing, lamp trimming, chamber work, and floor scrubbing. These occupied the girls most of the time after school and on Saturdays. In the days of the big galvanized wash tubs, hand wringer, and the wash boiler, the family washing was an all-day job. So there was plenty of hand wringing and hanging out clothes after school. The process started on Sunday night when all the white clothes were "put to soak" in one of the big tubs. The bench which held two tubs was kept in the woodshed off the kitchen and brought into the kitchen so as to be near the cookstove where all the water was heated. Only cold water was piped into the kitchen sink. On Monday morning Mother started by scrubbing (on a wash board) the dirtier spots on the clothes. Then they were put in the wash boiler on the wood burning cook stove—in cold water and more of a very effective yellow soap, and left to boil. With our family of seven children there were several boiler loads as I remember. While these were boiling the colored clothes were scrubbed, wrung, and rinsed, and hung on the piazza to dry. Then the white clothes were taken from the boiler with a wooden paddle—a few at a time on the corner of the boiler—and put in a second tub for rinsing and wringing before they were hung out to dry. We were always through by supper time.

I did a little ironing almost every night after school and on Saturday mornings. A board similar in shape to the modern ironing board but with no legs was used. The large end was put on the kitchen sink and the small end on the back of a kitchen chair. The basket of clothes on the chair kept the board firm. An old blanket and sheet tacked to the board made an excellent ironing surface. Four heavy flat irons were heated on the cook stove. Heavy holders had to be used as the handles got very hot too. I think the boys' shirts, with their stiff collars and cuffs, were my specialty. When [my brother] Steve brought his friends home from college, he used to introduce me as his laundress—"the one who does such a good job on my dress shirts." The collars and cuffs were dipped in cold starch, wrapped in a towel, and then ironed until they were dry. They did look nice, but what a pain in the neck. Of course, we did not complain about our own clothes with the ruffles and lace.

Luckily not all the household chores were as time consuming as the family laundry. Lamp trimming had to be done about once a week. Two lanterns used in the barn, about three or four small lamps, and the hanging lamp from over the dining room table were our sources of light. Except for the hanging lamp, they were kept on a shelf over the kitchen sink. They were filled with kerosene, the wicks trimmed, and the chimneys washed. That was my job—as soon as I was old enough—as long as I can remember it seems. I took great pride in that task, and got many a pat on the back. They did look nice and gave good light. At least we thought so in those days. The first year I taught school—a country school right after I finished high school in 1916—the five of us who

were working chipped together enough to have the house and barn wired for electricity. That ended my lamp trimming days.

Another weekly task was floor scrubbing. The floors in the dining room and kitchen were plain old floors with wide boards at first. Later these were replaced with nice hardwood with narrow boards. These were much easier to scrub. This task was done on hands and knees with a brush and good, soapy water. That was my job too, after [my older sister] Caroline went to college in 1907, and before [my younger sister] Anne was old enough.

COOKING AND FOOD PREPARATION
(March 1976)

At the "Clifford Homestead" in my time the cooking was done almost entirely by mother. The girls helped some with the preparation—like peeling vegetables and fruit and frying doughnuts. Saturday was the big pastry baking day as the oven of the wood-burning stove was hot all day. A pot of beans was in one corner of the oven while sheets of cookies baked at the same time. Doughnuts were fried in a deep iron kettle on top of the stove and brown bread was steamed in a copper kettle. One custard pie was also baked that day for Sunday morning breakfast. The beans were eaten for Saturday night supper, Sunday morning breakfast, and Monday noon dinner. Bread and pies (pumpkin, squash, apple, and mincemeat) were made another day.

In her well equipped (for those days) pantry, my mother could mix up batches of doughnuts, molasses or sugar cookies, and pie crust quicker than you can imagine. A barrel of flour, a bucket which held 25 lbs of sugar, a 5-lb pail of lard, and jug of sour milk, and molasses were standard stock—with, of course, the necessary seasonings and spices—baking soda and cream of tartar (I never heard of baking powder until after I left home)—salt, pepper, sage, mustard, cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger. I do not remember anything about the preparation of meat, but it was always there for the noon meal, except Sunday. On Sunday we had oyster stew or something easy to prepare after church. You may wonder what we ate for supper. As long as I can remember we seldom missed a supper of crackers and milk with a piece of dried salt fish or herring, apple sauce or fruit in season, cookies, and tea for grown ups. (The crackers were St. Johnsbury, round and double; I've never seen any since.) Even when we might have company for supper, my father still had his bowl of milk with crackers while the rest of us ate the special menu of hash in Winter and salmon and potato salad in Summer, with hot rolls. A few blueberries in season were good in a bowl of crackers and milk.

For the bread—6 to 8 loaves at a time—the ingredients (flour, milk, yeast, and lard) were mixed together in the evening in a large milk pan and left overnight. In the morning the dough was kneaded vigorously on the floured board, shaped, and placed in the bread pan and "set to rise." When each small mass of dough reached the top of the pan, it was time to bake. How long? I expect my mother knew as she also seemed to know when the oven was hot enough. A wood-burning stove was evidently very good for such baking as the loaves were always a golden brown and never burned.

The preparation of baked beans started Friday night. A quart and one cup of dry beans were brought from the shed chamber, "picked over," and put to soak in cold water. Saturday morning, after being par boiled for a couple of hours, the beans were put in a bean pot with salt pork, molasses, and enough water to cover, and baked until supper time. They were good then, but even better after being warmed over for Sunday morning breakfast and Monday dinner.

Pies—apple, pumpkin, squash, mince, and blueberry—were made in season. At least two were made at one time. Seven to nine pumpkin pies were made at once—it depended on the size of the pumpkin. The pumpkin was cooked in salted water until tender, then put through a strainer. Eggs, milk, and spices were added. This mixture was kept warm in a large milk pan then ladled into the crusts and baked like a custard pie. They were really good. Mother always peeled the apples for the pies. That was one of her "sitting down" jobs. Mince meat was usually made in the Fall when apples were plentiful. I think the meat came from the less choice cuts from the "side" of beef which was on hand at that time. It was stored in a crock in the cellar and was available all Winter as long as it lasted. Blueberry pies were really a Summer treat, but occasionally if enough berries were picked in the Summer for canning, we would have one in the Winter.

Cream toast with boiled cider applesauce, corn fritters, and fish chowder were very popular. Corn fritters, of course, were made during the corn season—late August and Sept. Blueberry gingerbread with homemade cottage cheese I will never forget. July, August, and September were the fresh vegetable months. Green peas from our garden were usually ready by the Fourth of July. I have never eaten peas which tasted like those picked in the morning and cooked for the noon meal. It never seemed like work to pick a milk pail full of peas, sit on the front "piazza," and shell them. That season was too short! Vegetables from our garden which could be kept through the Winter were potatoes, carrots, turnips, beets, and cabbage. Tomatoes in season were sliced, sugared, and eaten for desert. They were delicious. We must have stored up enough Vitamin C to carry us through the Winter!

FOOD STORAGE
(March 1976)

When the weather settled down to continued freezing in the Fall, at least one pig was butchered, cut into usable portions, and most of it was stored in the shed chamber. That was a real freezer. A part of the meat was put in a tub in the cellar and covered with brine for salt pork. Hogshead cheese was also made from the less edible parts. The liver was a delicacy. A side or quarter of beef was also cut up and stored in the "freezer." A meat man with his horse-drawn vehicle and supply of meat called regularly—probably once a week. He supplied the rest of our needs.

We stored some eggs in water glass, but I do not think that was very successful. The water glass was supposed to harden and not freeze. The container was kept in a milkroom which was located in one corner of the cellar. It got pretty cold in Winter. Digging eggs out of frozen water glass was a real mess, as I recall.

A warmer part of the cellar was an ideal place to store potatoes, apples, turnips, etc. A closet for canned goods (blueberries, jelly, pickles, and tomatoes) was also in this section of the cellar. There was also a stove which was used when the weather was extremely cold. Milk was kept upstairs in the pantry in the Winter and in the cellar milk room in the Summer.

We had a refrigerator which held a 50 lb cake of ice. It was in the dining room until the hardwood floors were laid. Then it was moved to the woodshed—not as convenient, but an improvement in the looks of the dining room. A deep pan under the box caught the water as the ice melted. It, of course, had to be emptied. The system on that chore was not too good. Consequently, it (the pan) either ran over or was so full that some water was always spilled. It was a great relief when the box was moved to the shed and the pan was replaced by a pipe through the floor and the water drained off under the house. You may wonder why the refrigerator was not put in the kitchen. There just was no room for it. The cook stove and wood box took up a lot of room.

III. Diaries 1918, 1919, 1922, 1923

by Merton S. Parsons

Editor's Preface

Some years ago Mary Parsons transcribed Dad's diaries. She also had the foresight back in the early 1970s to go over the diaries with Dad himself: Dad filled in some undecipherable words and explained some terms and identified some people with whom we were not familiar. We have retained most of the original spelling and grammar, changing only that which might produce confusion. Occasionally we have inserted editorial comments in brackets.

DIARY 1918

CAST OF CHARACTERS (In order of appearance)

The Author: Merton S. Parsons, aged 10/11
Papa: Oscar W. Parsons, aged 39
Mama: Luella Rich Parsons, aged 40
Phil: Philip S. Parsons, Merton's brother, aged 6
Millard: Millard (Mid) Cummings, Merton's chum, aged 11
The Kings: Neighboring farm at end of Town Farm Road
Bernice: Bernice (Bunny) Parsons, Merton's sister, aged 8
Bud: Bud Colby, a school friend

Aunt Mary: Mary F. Parsons Shurtleff, aged 43
Aunt Annie: Annie I. Parsons, aged 49
Aunt Dora: Dora Parsons Muzzy, aged 47
Aunt Afee: Apphia Parsons Clifford, aged 53
Alvin: Alvin Lovejoy, a neighbor
Shirley: Shirley R. Parsons, Merton's brother, aged 3/4
Lee: Lee Dudley, a neighbor
John: John T. Parsons, Merton's uncle, aged 51
Wisdom: A calf
Leachy: A school acquaintance
Fred Judkins: A school friend
Charlotte: A school friend
Will: Will Thomas, Oscar's cousin; married Luella in 1926, becoming MSP's step-father
Aunt Nevers: A friend of Luella's, living near Auburn
Bosis: A school friend
Grampa Rich: Horace Rich, living near Oxford
Hollis: Hollis Rich, Merton's cousin
Lewis: Lewis Rich, Merton's cousin
Marion: Marion Wheeler, a neighbor and school friend
Uncle Henry: Henry Muzzy, husband of Aunt Dora
Willard Clark: A neighbor
Frank Clark: A neighbor; a mechanic, noted for traveling in a motorcycle with a side-car
Mrs. Eliot: ?
Henry: Henry Plummer, a school friend
Aunt Etta: Etta Rich, Luella's sister, and MSP's aunt
Dr. Littlefield: Local doctor; murdered in 1930s
Jim Clark: A neighbor
Gramy: Mary T. Parsons, aged 75
The Makewaters: Rev. McWhorter and Wife
Uncle Rob: Merton's Great Uncle Robert Thomas, aged 75
Freal: Freeland Cummings, a neighbor; Mid's father
Uncle Addner: A Rich-side relative, living on Paris Hill
Dale Allen: A school friend
Millet's: ?
Mrs. MacKnight: A neighbor
Alice: Mrs. Alice Cummings, a neighbor; Mid's mother
Mr. Holden: Driver of the school team
Lillian MacKnight: A neighbor
The Knights: Hudson Knight and family, neighbors
George Elder: A neighbor

January

Jan. 1, Tuesday: Built a derrick with my American buildery builder. 20 below zero. The hay-press went by. Papa hauled two loads of wood.
Jan. 2, Wednesday: 13 below zero. Built a semaphore. Papa hauled a load of wood.
Jan. 3, Thursday: 27 below zero. Snow in afternoon. Built a saw rig with my america.
Jan. 4, Friday: 17 below zero. Wind blew all day. Papa hauled a load of pressed hay.
Jan. 5, Saturday: 7 below zero. Wind blowed hard. Mama and I went to town. Phil got very cold.
Jan. 6, Sunday: 8 above zero. Went to church in forenoon. Went to Millard's in P.M.
Jan. 7, Monday: 10 above zero. Snowed about all day. Papa hauled a load of hay.
Jan. 8, Tuesday: 23 above zero. Snowed all day. Papa broke roads in forenoon.
Jan. 9, Wednesday: 8 above zero. We went over to the Kings to watch them press hay and got ([illegible]).
Jan. 10, Thursday: Went over to the Kings to watch them press hay and when I came back I helped scrape pond.
Jan. 11, Friday: 8 above zero. Went skiing in forenoon and went over to Kings to watch hay press.
Jan. 12, Saturday: 21 above zero. Snowed and rained in forenoon. Built a windmill with my A.B.
Jan. 13, Sunday: 8 below zero. We went to church in forenoon. I read in afternoon.
Jan. 14, Monday: School begun. We slid pieces of ice down over the bank at school.
Jan. 15, Tuesday: 3 below zero. Snowed hard all day. Came home from school at noon.
Jan. 16, Wednesday: Zero. We didn't go to school. Papa broke out roads all day.
Jan. 17, Thursday: 6 below zero. We were late at school. Had a good time at school.
Jan. 18, Friday: Papa's birthday. Bought Papa some candy for his birthday.
Jan. 19, Saturday: Went to village with Mama.
Jan. 20, Sunday: Went to church in forenoon. Wind blew in afternoon.
Jan. 21, Monday: Went to school. Bernice and Phil didn't go to school.
Jan. 22, Tuesday: Went to school. Bought my first thrift stamp. Had hard geography lesson.
Jan. 23, Wednesday: Wind blew hard in afternoon and evening.
Jan. 24, Thursday: Very cold. Went up in square with Millard.
Jan. 25, Friday: 9 below zero. Snowed all day. Had a bad cold.
Jan. 26, Saturday: Zero. Went skiing and played Hide and Seek in forenoon. Built a ferris wheel with my A.B.
Jan. 27, Sunday: 18 below zero. Didn't go to church. Papa and I had bad colds.
Jan. 28, Monday: 30 below zero. Bud froze both checks and an ear, and some others did to.
Jan. 29, Tuesday: Zero. School team didn't come in. Went down to Millard's and he killed an owl.
Jan. 30, Wednesday: Zero. School team didn't come in. We built some little sleds.
Jan. 31, Thursday: 4 below zero. Went to school. I didn't feel very well.

February

Feb. 1, Friday: 11 below zero. Went to school. I didn't feel very well. Papa went to basketball.

Feb. 2, Saturday: 14 below zero. Sunny. When the ground- hog came out he could see his shadow. Cheer up, 6 more weeks of winter.

Feb. 3, Sunday: 12 below zero. I didn't go to church. Mama and Bernice did.

Feb. 4, Monday: 40 below zero. Stayed in house all day. Papa run engine some.

Feb. 5, Tuesday: Didn't go to school. Papa broke roads. Stayed in house about all day.

Feb. 6, Wednesday: 30 below zero. Didn't go to school. School team didn't come.

Feb. 7, Thursday: Pretty cold. Went to school. The boys jumped from swings at school.

Feb. 8, Friday: Went to school. Teacher sent some of the boys in because they jumped from swing.

Feb. 9, Saturday: Snowed all day. Didn't go outdoors much. The water pipe was froze up.

Feb. 10, Sunday: Zero. Didn't go to church. Aunt Mary and Annie and Aunt Dora and Aunt Afee came up.

Feb. 11, Monday: 10 below zero. Went to school. Warm in morning and cold in P.M.

Feb. 12, Tuesday: Mild. Snowed and rained about all day. It was good snowballing.

Feb. 13, Wednesday: Mild. Went to school. Went up in village and bought some valentines.

Feb. 14, Thursday: Warm. Went to school. Didn't have a valentine box. Dale Alton and Millard gave me.

Feb. 15, Friday: 3 above zero. Phil was sick and didn't go to school. I got a war saving stamp. It was hot in school.

Feb. 16, Saturday: 8 below zero. Little crust. Went sliding. We went down to Millard's and went sliding down below Alvin's. It was rough.

Feb. 17, Sunday: 4 below zero. I didn't go to church. Some of us were sick. Phil's got the measles.

Feb. 18, Monday: 10 below zero. Didn't go to school. Aunt Mary is up here. Mama is sick.

Feb. 19, Tuesday: Cold. Mama was sick. About all of us were sick. Phil was all broke out.

Feb. 20, Wednesday: 20 below zero. I broke out and so did Bernice and Shirley.

Feb. 21, Thursday: Cold. Laid in bed all day. Didn't feel very well. Phil got out of bed.

Feb. 22, Friday: Cold. Laid in bed all day and so did Bernice and Shirley.

Feb. 23, Saturday: Cold. I felt better and got up and sat in the big chair. Phil was dressed.

Feb. 24, Sunday: Didn't go to church. Bernice and I were up and dressed. My [illegible] were about all in.

Feb. 25, Monday: Cool. Sunny. All of us were up. We had to stay in the house all day.

Feb. 26, Tuesday: Stayed in house all day. Pulled out a loose tooth. There was a fire on Brit Hill [Slip-Toe Davis' farm on Britt Hill, southwest of the Farm].

Feb. 27, Wednesday: Sunny. I wanted to go outdoors but couldn't. Aunt Dora came up and we played Rook.

Feb. 28, Thursday: We had to stay in the house all day. The *Youth's Companion* came and Aunt Mary read to us.

March

March 1, Friday: Snowed about all day. We had to stay in the house all day. Papa cut Phil's and Shirley's and my hair.

March 2, Saturday: Sunny. Hot. Bernice and I and Phil went outdoors for the first time. We walked around on the crust.

March 3, Sunday: Windy. Didn't go to church. Aunt Mary was up here. We didn't go out-doors.

March 4, Monday: Papa and John went to town meeting. Papa went to the dentist in afternoon.

March 5, Tuesday: Mild. Went outdoors and went skiing and sliding. Papa hauled logs.

March 6, Wednesday: Mild. Didn't go outdoors. Papa went to the village in forenoon. Lee's cat came up.

March 7, Thursday: Snowed all day. I didn't go out doors. Papa went to the village twice hauling logs.

March 8, Friday: Warm. We went out doors. We had a good time. Millard came up in the afternoon.

March 9, Saturday: Warm. I went down to Millard's and stayed all day. We went up in the big pine.

March 10, Sunday: Windy. Didn't go to church. Snowed all day. Stayed in the house all day.

March 11, Monday: Millard came up and we went out in the barn and played with Wisdom.

March 12, Tuesday: Cold. Went to school. Snowed about all day. The corner by Maxim's is cut off.

March 13, Wednesday: Didn't go to school. Wind blew hard. Millard went with his father. Cold.

March 14, Thursday: Went to school. The *Youth's Companion* came.

March 15, Friday: Very cold. Went to school. Four current events came. We had current events in A.M.

March 16, Saturday: Fair. Made a path in P.M. and went skiing. I made some ski poles. Papa hauled.

March 17, Sunday: Didn't go to church. Papa and I went down to Farmers Union and got sugar.

March 18, Monday: We went to school. Had a good time at school. Some bare ground.

March 19, Tuesday: Warm. We went to school. Very nice day. We played tag at school.
March 20, Wednesday: Went to school. I had a good time at school. Warm. Saw some robins.
March 21, Thursday: Went to school. Very warm. Had hard arithmetic.
March 22, Friday: Went to school. Warm. Had a good time at school. Saw a robin.
March 23, Saturday: Warm. Went sliding on the crust. Went down in the woods.
[Several pages missing]

April

April 21, Sunday: Rainy. We got ready for church but it rained so we didn't go.
April 22, Monday: Foggy in A.M. We went to school. Millard swapped water pistol for printing press.
April 23, Tuesday: Sunny. Went to school. Millard swapped back. Played ball at school.
April 24, Wednesday: Cool. Went to school. Leachy hurt my arm on purpose and took my ball.
April 25, Thursday: Went to school. Cool. Leachy hurt Fred Judkens. He's a darn fool of a boy, Leachy is.
April 26, Friday: Went to school. Warm. Played ball at school. We played victolly.
April 27, Saturday: Warm. Millard and I went fishing but we didn't catch anything.
April 28, Sunday: Warm. We went to church. We went for ride with auto in afternoon.
April 29, Monday: Rainy. We went to school. The boys broke Millard's and my tennis balls by batting.
April 30, Tuesday: Rainy. Went to school. It cleared off in the P.M. Played ball at school.

May

May 1, Wednesday: Very rainy. Went to school. Stayed in school house most of the time.
May 2, Thursday: Went to school. Boys played ball. Warm.
May 3, Friday: Warm. Papa and Mama went to Lewiston and got me a baseball. Got early at school.
May 4, Saturday: Warm. I picked rocks in A.M. Papa went suckering [fishing in stream] and got a lot.
May 5, Sunday: Warm. I didn't feel very well. Mama and Bernice went to church.
May 6, Monday: Very warm. Went to school. I was very hot. I made a speech at school.

May 7, Tuesday: Very warm. Cloudy. Went to school. Played ball at school. Took my mit to school.

May 8, Wednesday: Warm and windy. Bought an ice cream. Walked up to village with Charlotte.

May 9, Thursday: Cool. Went to school. *Youth's Companion* came.

May 10, Friday: Went to school. Played ball at school. Grammer School has won all.

May 11, Saturday: Warm. I harrowed. Went to ball game in P.M. Mama got me some sneakers.

May 12, Sunday: Cool. Went to church. It is Mother's Day. Everybody wore pinks.

May 13, Monday: Cool in A.M. Very hot in P.M. Went up at village at noon.

May 14, Tuesday: Rainy. Went to school. Rained all day. Papa sowed seed.

May 15, Wednesday: Warm. Went to school. Mama painted kitchen. Having review now.

May 16, Thursday: Went to school. Will came up and white washed. They gave away seeds at village.

May 17, Friday: Very hot. Didn't go to school. I picked rocks in A.M. Papa sold bull at evening.

May 18, Saturday: Warm. Two men came after our bull. Went to town with papa. Went to Norway.

May 19, Sunday: Very hot. Didn't go to church. We went to Aunt Neevers in P.M.

May 20, Monday: Very hot. Went to school. Lilacs and lots of flowers blossomed. Buttercups.

May 21, Tuesday: Very hot. Went to school. Played ball at school. Had a good time.

May 22, Wednesday: Cool. Went to school. Went and had my hair cut. Cool.

May 23, Thursday: Warm. Went to school. Bosis wanted us to play on his team, so we did.

May 24, Friday: Hot. Went to school. Grammer school team practiced and us small boys run bases.

May 25, Saturday: Warm. I rode the horse to plant corn. We planted pop corn, muskmelons, and watermelons.

May 26, Sunday: Warm. Went to church. Went over to Grampa Riches. Hollis and Lewis were there.

May 27, Monday: Rainy. Went to school. Rained about all day. Glad the rain came.

May 28, Tuesday: Warm. Went to school. A man came to school and he had a lot of things from Italy.

May 29, Wednesday: Went to school. Went up to see the soldiers go. Had to wait a long while.

May 30, Thursday: Didn't go to school because it is Memorial Day. Went fishing and got 3 fish. Went to town.

May 31, Friday: Cloudy. Didn't go to school. Went fishing in A.M. Got 1. Went in P.M. and got 2 trout and 5 chub.

June

June 1, Saturday: Rained in A.M. Warm in P.M. Mama went to the village. Papa planted garden.

June 2, Sunday: Very hot. Went to church. Aunt Mary came up. Mama and Papa took Mary back.

June 3, Monday: Very hot. Went to school. Charlotte and I winked. Saw big fish in river. I signed war stamp pledge.

June 4, Tuesday: Warm. Went to school. Played tag at school. My pop corn is up.

June 5, Wednesday: Went to school. Warm. Got out half an hour early and went to game. Paris got beat 14 to 0.

June 6, Thursday: Rainy. Went to school. Marian came up to see Be [Bernice]. Played hide and seek.

June 7, Friday: Rainy. Went to school. Rained about all day. Millard didn't go to school.

June 8, Saturday: Cool and windy. Went to Hebron to see ball game. Hebron beat. There was a total eclipse of the sun.

June 9, Sunday: Cloudy and warm. Went to church. It is children's Sunday.

June 10, Monday: Rainy. Went to school. Got our rank cards. I got two twos and the rest ones.

June 11, Tuesday: Warm. Went to school. This is the last week of school.

June 12, Wednesday: Misty and rainy. Went to school. Learned how to tie a bowline. I broke out.

June 13, Thursday: Cool. I was broke out with chicken pox. Went to school to get my things.

June 14, Friday: I didn't go to school. I was broke out. Had ice cream at school Millard said.

June 15, Saturday: Warm. Millard and I pulled corn ears a lot. Mama changed out libery books.

June 16, Sunday: Cloudy. Mama and Bernice went to church. I didn't. Mama and Papa went in evening.

June 17, Monday: Warm and rainy. We thinned corn. It rained some. Got big piece finished.

June 18, Tuesday: Windy. Started on the lower piece. Did 6 rows in A.M. Papa paid us $1 for thinning.

June 19, Wednesday: Cool and windy. We finished the lower piece. I cultivated in P.M. A man came up to hoe.

June 20, Thursday: Warm. Papa hoed in A.M. Henry and Dora came up in P.M. Pulled hawkweed in P.M. Windy.

June 21, Friday: Warm. 1st day of summer. Pulled hawkweed in A.M. Went down to Mid's in P.M. Windy.

June 22, Saturday: Cool. Rained hard all day. Papa went to village. Papa took fishing rods to have them fixed.

June 23, Sunday: Cool. Rained about all day. Didn't go to church. Millard came up. Bernice hurt herself.

June 24, Monday: Cool. Mama has stove up. Papa went to village. I went down to Millard's. Papa went after Willard Clark.

June 25, Tuesday: Very hot. We peeled maple in A.M. We went down to Millard's in P.M. Mama got some strawberries.

June 26, Wednesday: Hot. Went to see the soldiers go. Took Uncle Henry's fish-rod and basket. Fixed fishlines in evening.

June 27, Thursday: Warm. Went fishing in Andover. Went across ferry. Caught 29 fish. Saw Aunt Mary.

June 28, Friday: Foggy. I made thing to put fishing things in. Went fishing in A.M. and caught 4 trout.

June 29, Saturday: Foggy. Frank Clark came up to hoe. I went hunting but didn't see anything.

June 30, Sunday: Very hot. Went to church. Read in afternoon. Mama and Papa went to church.

July

July 1, Monday: Foggy. Went down to Millard's in A.M. and P.M. Misty and rainy.

July 2, Tuesday: Warm. Frank came up and Papa hoed. I made boats.

July 3, Wednesday: Hot. Papa got out haying tools. Papa ground sythes. I pulled corn.

July 4, Thursday: The 4th of July. Papa mowed clover. We went to W. Paris. Very hot.

July 5, Friday: Misty. I pulled corn in P.M. Millard brought up 22 and blanks.

July 6, Saturday: Warm. Misty in A.M. Went down to Millard's in P.M.

July 7, Sunday: Warm in A.M. We went to a ride in P.M.

July 8, Monday: Rained awful hard. Papa cut bushes. We played in brook. Rained.

July 9, Tuesday: Rained in P.M. I caught a fish 9 in. long. In P.M. I caught two.

July 10, Wednesday: Rained. Papa shot at a woodchuck. I mowed lawn. Mid came up.

July 11, Thursday: Warm. We went fishing on Seagant brook. Caught a few. I shot a woodchuck. Went to lawn party.

July 12, Friday: Warm. We got in two loads of hay. Rained in late P.M. Cloudy.

July 13, Saturday: Warm. I went down to Mid's. We cultivated in A.M. Mama changed libery books.

July 14, Sunday: Cool. We went to church. Went down to Millard's in P.M. Read in evening.

July 15, Monday: Hot. Millard and I went to town alone. We took the milk. Papa hoed. Mama went to movies.

July 16, Tuesday: Very hot. Got in a lot of hay. I raked after. Mama raked with horse-rake. Good day.

July 17, Wednesday: Hot in A.M. We got in two loads of hay. Rained hard in P.M. Hay got wet.

July 18, Thursday: Hot. We went fishing. I caught 1. We went down to Mrs. Eliot's in evening. Didn't get in hay.

July 19, Friday: Very hot. Papa raked hay in A.M. Got in 6 loads in P.M. Went blueberrying. Got some.

July 20, Saturday: Hot. We got 8 quarts of blueberries. We got in 5 loads of hay. Got all cleaned.

July 21, Sunday: Very hot. Mama and Graminy went to church. We went bathing in P.M.

July 22, Monday: Very hot. About 100. Papa mowed a lot of hay. We didn't get in any. Very hot.

July 23, Tuesday: Hot and muggy. We got in 5 loads of hay. I raked after 2 and tedded 2. Hot, hot.

July 24, Wednesday: Foggy. Went fishing in A.M. Caught 3. Went down to Mid's in P.M. Rained hard in P.M.

July 25, Thursday: Foggy in A.M. We got 6 qts. of blueberries. We chasted our cows in P.M. and got them.

July 26, Friday: Foggy. Mid and I went fishing. I got 5 trout. We got in two loads of hay in P.M.

July 27, Saturday: Very hot. We got in hay. I raked after with the horse rake. Got cleaned up.

July 28, Sunday: Hot. We went to church. Rained awful hard in P.M. Read in P.M.

July 29, Monday: Pap mowed hay. Foggy in A.M. We didn't get in any hay. Mid came up in A.M.

July 30, Tuesday: Cloudy. We went blueberrying in A.M. Got 3 qts. Rained hard in A.M. Papa tedded.

July 31, Wednesday: Cool in A.M. Mama went raspberrying. I went over to Henry's [Swett]. Uncle Henry came up. Got in hay.

August

August 1, Thursday: Very hot. We got in 4 loads of hay. I raked with horse-rake.

August 2, Friday: Cool in A.M. We got in 5 loads of hay. I raked with horse-rake. Cool in evening.

August 3, Saturday: I raked hay in A.M. We got in five loads of hay. We went to movies in P.M. They were good.

August 4, Sunday: Cool. We went to Naples and ate our lunch on a steamboat. Had good time.

August 5, Monday: Misty. Papa ground mowing machine sythe. I went fishing. Didn't catch any.

August 6, Tuesday: Hot. We went blueberrying on Shaws. We got 26 quarts. We got in one load of hay.

August 7, Wednesday: Hot. Rained in A.M. We got in two loads of hay. I raked hay. Rained in night.

August 8, Thursday: Hot in P.M. Aunt Etta came up in P.M. We got in 2 loads. Rained very hard.

August 9, Friday: Foggy. Rained in A.M. Papa went to village in P.M. Played out in barn.

August 10, Saturday: Foggy. We worked on road all day. Mid came up in P.M. Mama changed libery books.

August 11, Sunday: Warm. Foggy. Uncle Henry came up. The Clifford's came up in P.M. 2 of our cows got out.

August 12, Monday: Very hot. Papa hauled a load of straw. We finished the Big Field. Got in 2 loads.

August 13, Tuesday: Foggy. Papa hauled hay out of Grain Barn to other barn. Dr. Littlefield came up in P.M.

Aug. 14, Wednesday: We mowed oats in A.M. Thunder shower in P.M. Jim Clark's house burnt up. Thunder loud.

August 15, Thursday: Hot. We went down to Lewiston. I bought a boat. We ate our dinner at the lake. Went to show.

August 16, Friday: Hot. Hauled load of hay to village. I earnt 10 cents. We got in a load of oats. Papa went to dance.

August 17, Saturday: Cool. We got in 3 loads of oats. Mowed oats in A.M. Mama changed libery books.

August 18, Sunday: Read in A.M. All of them except Gramy and I went to camp meeting.

Aug. 19, Monday: Warm. We got in oats. Aunt Annie came and Aunt Mary too. Annie bought us some candy.

Aug. 20, Tuesday: Hot. We got in oats. It was 36 at night. We have got in 7 loads of oats.

Aug. 21, Wednesday: We got in one load of oats. Papa took them and went for a ride. I went fishing. Caught 3.

Aug. 22, Thursday: Warm. I went fishing. I caught 2. We got in a load of hay in P.M. Papa took them for a ride.

Aug. 23, Friday: I went fishing. Caught 2. Hot. The Clifford's, the Mussy's, and the Makewater's came up. Uncle Rob came.

Aug. 24, Saturday: Papa mowed oats by hand in A.M. I took Aunt Annie to town. We changed libery books.

Aug. 25, Sunday: Hot. Mama went to church. We went bathing at Carwell's camp. Went to Mr. Eliot's.

Aug. 26, Monday: Warm. Papa mowed oats by hand. I helped Papa hoe in P.M. Rained a little in P.M.

Aug. 27, Tuesday: Hot. Papa finished mowing oats. Freal came up. Papa got in 2 loads. We went bathing in pond.

Aug. 28, Wednesday: We went down to Millard's in A.M. We finished getting in oats. Went for ride in eve.

Aug. 29, Thursday: Cloudy. Papa went over to Hebron. Mid and I went fishing. I caught 2.

Aug. 30, Friday: Hot. We pulled beans. Mid helped us. We went bathing in P.M. I can swim on a plank.

Aug. 31, Saturday: Warm. Papa went to village. We cut weeds. Had a little corn roast in P.M. Mid went.

September

Sept. 1, Sunday: Hot. We went to church in A.M. The Mussy's and the Clifford's and the Thomas'es came up.

Sept. 2, Monday: Hot. Papa took Aunt Annie to the station. We got two coons in traps. Papa mowed clover.

Sept. 3, Tuesday: Hot. I cut weeds in A.M. Papa hauled load of straw. We went to Fordson demonstration.

Sept. 4, Wednesday: Warm. Papa hauled straw. We found a bossy [new calf]. We got in two loads of hay in P.M.

Sept. 5, Thursday: Picked rocks in A.M. We got in two loads of hay. My foot is sore.

Sept. 6, Friday: Warm. There was two squirrels and a skunk in traps. I shot a squirrel. We got in beans.

Sept. 7, Saturday: Warm. Papa dug taters. We picked up taters in P.M. Papa mowed grass.

Sept. 8, Sunday: Warm. We went to church. We got some nuts. I read in eve.

Sept. 9, Monday: Warm. Papa went to town. Papa fixed road. I shot a squirrel when he was running.

Sept. 10, Tuesday: Warm. First day of [Oxford County] fair. There was a crow in trap. We picked up taters in P.M. Frost.

Sept. 11, Wednesday: Warm. I and Papa went to fair. I spent 35 cents. Papa drove auto. Everything is 10 cents a lot there.

Sept. 12, Thursday: We went to the fair. Last day. There is a horse with 8 feet. Aunt Dora came up.

Sept. 13, Friday: Cool. Misty. I tried to make a submerrine toy. Papa went to town. We cleaned hen house.

Sept. 14, Saturday: Warm. We picked up taters in P.M. I picked up 9 bushels.

Sept. 15, Sunday: Hot. I didn't go to church. We went up to Uncle Addner's in P.M.

Sept. 16, Monday: Warm. This is the first day of school. Bernice and I are in the same room. Hellen Barns is our teacher.

Sept. 17, Tuesday: Cool. We went to school. Papa hauled a load of corn. Rained hard in P.M.

Sept. 18, Wednesday: Cool. It rained some of time. I sat in front of C.C. at school.

Sept. 19, Thursday: Warm. Went to school. Cloudy. We are having review in new work.

Sept. 20, Friday: Rainy. It rained hard about all day. We got some acorns. Found an old fish pole.

Sept. 21, Saturday: Cool and windy. Papa put up carrege. Mama and I changed libery books.

Sept. 22, *Sunday:* Cool. Went to church. Windy. Dora and Henry came up. Papa carried them down.

Sept. 23, Monday: Rainy. Went to school. I didn't feel very well. Dale Allen was sick. Everybody is feeling bad.

Sept. 24, Tuesday: Cool. Went to school. Rained hard. I feel better. Papa got a load of waste [corn stalks and husks, from the canning factory, used as cow feed].

Sept. 25, Wednesday: Cool. Papa went down to Millets to cut corn. It was too wet. Papa cut corn here.

Sept. 26, Thursday: Cool. Rained all day. Had good time at school. We are having factoring.

Sept. 27, Friday: Warm. Went to school. Mid and I walked home. I hurt my hand not very bad.

Sept. 28, Saturday: Warm. Papa hauled corn to Oxford. Phil and I cut pumpkins. Cut fodder in P.M.

Sept. 29, Sunday: Warm. Lots of folks have got the influendways [influenza]. We went over to Norway Lake.

Sept. 30, Monday: Warm. Papa hauled a load of corn. We got in pumpkins. Papa cut corn.

October

Oct. 1, Tuesday: Law goes off [hunting becomes legal]. Cool. We cut corn in P.M. Silo is 1/2 full.

Oct. 2, Wednesday: The Allies have took St. Quentien. We got in corn fodder. I went hunting.

Oct. 3, Thursday: Cool. We cut in corn fodder. Papa hauled a load of corn. I cut corn. Rained.

Oct. 4, Friday: Warm. Papa cut corn with corn binder. Hauled load of corn. Cut in corn. [Silo] Most full.

Oct. 5, Saturday: Warm. Rained. Papa hauled a load of corn. I went down to Millard's. Rained all day. Corn all in.

Oct. 6, *Sunday:* Rained all day. Church is not keeping on account of the influendways.

Oct. 7, Monday: Warm. I carried the milk to village. We got in corn fodder in P.M. Silo most full.

Oct. 8, Tuesday: Warm. We picked apples all day. Mid came up. Cut in 2 loads of corn. Silo full.

Oct. 9, Wednesday: Warm. I carried milk to village. Went over to Aunt Etta's. Ida has got influensa.

Oct. 10, Thursday: Warm. We picked apples all day. Phil and Shirl have got peck baskets. Picked out side roads.

Oct. 11, Friday: Warm. We picked apples. Papa went to village. I went hunting. Didn't get any.

Oct. 12, Saturday: Cool. We picked apples all day. Mama went to village. Rained a little.

Oct. 13, Sunday: Warm. We went for ride in P.M. Church is not keeping. Foggy in morning.

Oct. 14, Monday: Warm. We picked apples all day. We have the horse pasture all picked.

Oct. 15, Tuesday: Cold. Awful windy. We picked apples all day. We have the apples half picked.

Oct. 16, Wednesday: Warm. I carried milk to village. Picked apples in P.M. Played in leaves some.

Oct. 17, Thursday: Cool. Picked apples in forenoon. Went hunting in P.M. Didn't get anything. Rained a little.

Oct. 18, Friday: Snowed. Made snow balls. Papa went to town. We picked apples in P.M. Apples most in.

Oct. 19, Saturday: Warm. Picked apples in A.M. Went to football game at Hebron. Hebron beat 48 to [illegible].

Oct. 20, Sunday: Cool and windy. Church is not keeping. Had a [illegible] at home. Aunt Dora and Henry came up, Cliffords too.

Oct. 21, Monday: Cool. We picked apples all day. The Young Orchard is most picked. Papa went to town.

Oct. 22, Tuesday: Cool and windy. We picked apples. Young Orchard is picked, side of road too.

Oct. 23, Wednesday: Picked apples. Papa went to village. I pulled beans. I went down to Millard's.

Oct. 24, Thursday: I went fishing. Didn't catch any. Warm. We went over to Will's, all but me. I watched cows.

Oct. 25, Friday: Misty. I built a little house in A.M. Papa and I went hunting. Saw 2 patrages [partridges] and two others.

Oct. 26, Saturday: Rained. Papa got 96 gal. of cider at Guerens. I finished my house. Mrs. MacKnight is dead.

Oct. 27, Sunday: Rainy. Papa was one of the bearers at the funeral. We went down to Alice's.

Oct. 28, Monday: Warm. School opened today. Inflewenza is most over.

Oct. 29, Tuesday: Rainy. We went to school. Went up to the mill to eat our dinner.

Oct. 30, Wednesday: Rainy. Went to school. Played ball at school.

Oct. 31, Thursday: Rainy. Went to school. This is Halloween. I scared Bernice.

November

Nov. 1, Friday: This is my [11th] birthday. Mama gave me ten cents. Mid and I went to social.

Nov. 2, Saturday: We got in our garden things in A.M. Went to football game at Hebron in P.M. Hebron beat.

Nov. 3, Sunday: Cool. Went to church. Read in afternoon. Papa watched cows.

Nov. 4, Monday: Cool. Saw a flock of geese. Played run throu at school, and ball.

Nov. 5, Tuesday: Warm. Played run throu at school. Mr. Holden run over his dog.

Nov. 6, Wednesday: Warm. Played run through at school. Made a map and used plasterine.

Nov. 7, Thursday: Warm. Played run through at school. Frank's dog was caught in a trap.

Nov. 8, Friday: Cool. Went to school. Played run throu at school. Went up to mill.

Nov. 9, Saturday: Cool. I carried milk to town. Got home at 9:30. All except me went to football game in P.M.

Nov. 10, Sunday: Cool. Went to church. Read in afternoon. The darned fool [Kaiser Bill] is off the throne.

Nov. 11, Monday: Warm. Hurrah, the Armitice is signed. Peace will come. Didn't have no school. Sold fire crackers half-price.

Nov. 12, Tuesday: Cool. Went to school. Alice has taken Lilian MaKnight.

Nov. 13, Wednesday: Cool. Went to school. We walked out to the corner. Charlotte asked me to hug her.

Nov. 14, Thursday: Cool. Went to school. Had a football at school. Papa is clap-boarding the house.

Nov. 15, Friday: Warm. Had a football at school. Mid played with the girls. *Youths Companion* came.

Nov. 16, Saturday: Warm. Papa fixed dam in ice pond. I made a little dam. Mama went to town.

Nov. 17, Sunday: Warm. Rainy. Mama and Bernice went to church. I read in P.M. Went down to dam.

Nov. 18, Monday: Cool. Rained some. Everybody passed notes. Had vegetable soup.

Nov. 19, Tuesday: Warm. Roads are bad. Had a arith. and history test. I mailed a letter to get a fur book.

Nov. 20, Wednesday: Cool. Rainy. Muddy. Papa went to village. Had a grammar test. I got 100 on my history; 98 in math.

Nov. 21, Thursday: Rainy. Got 100 on grammar test. Mid sent letter for fur book. Had a geog. test.

Nov. 22, Friday: Warm. Had a spelling test. Played football at school. I got a little notebook. Had social.

Nov. 23, Saturday: Cool. We sawed wood all day. Finished Freal's. My feet got cold. Charles has moved.

Nov. 24, Sunday: Went to church. Warm. We got our Sun. School badge. I read in P.M. We went to Mid's.

Nov. 25, Monday: Warm. Went to school. We got our rank cards. I got 2 two's. Mid got 2 three's and 4 two's and 3 [illegible].

Nov. 26, Tuesday: Cold. The ice is hard enough to hold. We skated on ice. I got postcard from Aunt A.

Nov. 27, Wednesday: Cold. We went skating in little ice pond. Aunt Mary came up. I bought lacing for football.

Nov. 28, Thursday: This is Thanksgiving Day. Cool. We had lots of nuts and candy and things. Went skating on big ice pond.

Nov. 29, Friday: Warm. Papa bought a bull and a cow on Paris Hill. My fur book came. We got home 3 P.M.

Nov. 30, Saturday: We set 7 traps, 4 by Knights. I went down to Mid's. Mama went to village.

(Several pages missing. Grandmother Parsons died during this period, on Dec. 27, 1918)

December

Dec. 29, Saturday: Cold. It snowed hard. We looked at our traps. We didn't go to church. Cool. We had Graminy's funeral. Some people came. Mid and I tried to dig out skunk den but couldn't. I went to village in afternoon.

Dec. 30, Sunday: Cool. We went to school. We went up to store. They have got the Christmas things out.

Dec. 31, Monday: Warm. I took the traps. We snowballed at school. Frank Clark shot a deer. We packed apples. It snowed hard. George Elder is packing.

DIARY 1919

by Merton S. Parsons

CAST OF CHARACTERS (In order of appearance)

The Author: Merton S. Parsons, aged 11/12
Carl Briggs: A neighbor
Alice Howard: A neighbor
Graminy: Merton's grandmother, Mary T. Parsons, aged 75; died Dec 27, 1918
Papa: Oscar W. Parsons, aged 40
Tom McKnight: A neighbor; married Aunt Mary in 1919
John: Merton's uncle, John T. Parsons, aged 52
Shirley: Merton's brother, Shirley R. Parsons, aged 4
Aunt Mary: Mary Parsons Shurtleff, aged 43; married Tom McKnight in 1919
Will Ripley: A neighbor
Freal: Freland Cummings, a neighbor
Bernice: Merton's sister, Bernice L. Parsons, aged 9
Mama: Luella Rich Parsons, aged 41
Hollis: Hollis Rich, Merton's cousin
Aunt Dora: Dora Parsons Muzzy, aged 48
Uncle Henry: Dora's husband
The Kings: Neighbors
Alice: Alice Cummings, a neighbor; wife of Freal
Mid: Millard Cummings, a neighbor, Merton's good friend, aged 12
Alice: Alice Cummings, Mid's older sister
The Cliffords: The Clifford family, who lived in South Paris; Aunt Apphia, Uncle Wallace, plus seven children (Wallace, Caroline, Earle, Stephen, Mary, Burt, and Anne)
Fred Wright: A neighbor
Herb Flood: A neighbor
Phil: Philip S. Parsons, Merton's brother, aged 6-7
Mr. Schoof: ?
Earl: Earle R. Clifford, Merton's cousin, aged 28
Annie: Anne Clifford, Merton's cousin, aged 14
Miss Barns: A school teacher
Alie Cairne: A neighbor
Agnes Fuller: A schoolteacher
Marian Wheeler: A school friend
Rose Witham: A schoolteacher
"Teddy": A school friend
Edna: A school friend
Dale: A school friend
Robert: A school friend

Howard Rogers: A school friend
Gladis: A school friend
Lester: A school friend
Henry: Henry Plummer, a school friend; sometimes also called "Hen"
Henry: Henry Swett, a neighbor boy, about Merton's age; sometimes called "Hen"
Philip Plummer: A school friend
Ruth: A school friend
Helen Judd: A school friend
Alton Ames: A school friend
Albert Martin: A school friend
Wallace W.: A school friend
Frank: (?)
Lillian Judkins: A school friend
The Knights: Hudson Knight and family, neighbors
Rocket: One of the horses on the farm
Wallace Ripley: Former hired man, and a distant cousin

January

Jan. 1, Wednesday: Stormy (0). The apple packers came. There are eight men. I carried milk to town. The stores are closed because it is new year. School is not keeping on account of the influenza. Carl Brigs died and so did Alice Howard and some others. Graminy [Mary T. Parsons] died last Thurs. Papa hauled 2 loads of apples. We have got the apples most packed. R.I. sings half the time. We played in barn a little. I had some books and a watch for Christmas.

Jan. 2, Thursday: Warm (33). Papa hauled apples. Tom McKnight hauled one load. Papa hauled two. John cut wood. We played games in afternoon. Shirley is a little sick. Aunt Mary is feeling bad. The apples are all packed and hauled. It was good snowballing. Some calendars came in the mail. Will Ripley has been very sick but is better.

Jan. 3, Friday: Stormy (26). It snowed hard in A.M. Papa went to village. John made a wood box. Went snowshoeing in P.M. There is a foot or more of snow. Freal came up. Some people are still sick. Bernice made patchwork.

Jan. 4, Saturday: Cool (21). Stormed in A.M. Mama went to village in P.M. I went snowshoeing. Mama got some candy. We played games. I wrote two letters. I got a letter from Hollis.

Jan. 5, Sunday: Warm (11). I read some. I went up to take up two traps on snowshoes and found a big fox in trap. I killed him with a stick. Mama and Papa were awfuly surprised. Papa skined him in A.M. He is full grown and prime. I carried Aunt Dora and Uncle Henry to village.

Jan. 6, Monday: Clear, cold (9). We went over to Kings to get a load of hay. We hauled it down to Oxford in P.M. There is a boy down there that milks four cows and feeds them. Also two pigs and a horse. I got awful cold coming home.

Jan. 7, Tuesday: Fair (2). I set some traps in A.M. I found a rabbit runway and I set a trap there. Papa went to village in A.M. Papa hauled wood in P.M. There is lots of tracks in the woods. Alice came up and helped Mama make dresses.

Jan. 8, Wednesday: Stormy (32). We didn't find nothing in traps. A fox had stepped right over the trap and didn't get in. Papa hauled wood in A.M. Papa killed a calf in P.M. I set two traps with calf's lungs. We played games in eve. I sent for a fur book.

Jan. 9, Thursday: Fair (21). There wasn't anything [in trap] in A.M. Alice came up and sewed. I went to village to carry milk. I sent my fur book down to Mid. School is not keeping yet. Fred Wright has the influenza but is better.

Jan. 10, Friday: Fair (-5). The wind blowed hard in A.M. I helped Mama fry doughnuts. There wasn't anything in the traps. I went down to Millard's in P.M. We set some traps. Mid caught something in his snares but it broke the snare and got away. Papa went to village in P.M. He sent my fox skin to Marley's. Papa had it insured for $15.

Jan. 11, Saturday: Blustering (0). It is very cold. There isn't anything in traps. I took up one trap. Papa went over to Kings and got a load of hay. Bernice is awful ugly. Papa hauled hay down to Herb Floods. I put some bees wax on some traps. Mid came up in P.M. We played games. John cut wood. Papa got awful cold. I got a thing from the Parcel post so if my fox skin gets lost I will get the money.

Jan. 12, Sunday: Fair (-5). The church is not keeping on account of the flu. There wasn't anything in traps. Mama, Bernice, and Aunt Mary went down to Cliffords in P.M. They brought me a book to read from Cliffords.

Jan. 13, Monday: Pleasant (0). We cleaned the icehouse out in A.M. I saw a rabbit runway and tried to set a snare, but I couldn't very well. I got a check from Murfuys for my fox skin. I got $13.10. Mama and I went to village in P.M. I cashed my check and put $10 in bank and kept $3. Mr. Schoof gave me a new watch because my other one didn't go very well for nothing. I bought me a book.

Jan. 14, Tuesday: Fair (20). Papa began to cut ice. Something got in my rabbit snare and broke it down. I found a fox runway. I set two traps. A fox had come and brushed the snow away from my trap and didn't get in. I went down to Millard's in P.M. Papa cut and hauled ice. I stepped on a cake of ice that I thought wasn't cut and started to go down in, but I stepped off and didn't get wet.

Jan. 15, Wednesday: Cool (33). Mama made mincemeat. I set two rabbit snares and two traps. Papa cut and hauled ice. Mama went to village. I had Mama buy some candy for Papa's birthday which is the 18th. Millard and Alice came up in P.M. We went sledding.

Jan. 16, Thursday: Warm (35). We cut and hauled ice. We are most through. Mama and Aunt Mary went over to Norway and John went with them. Bernice and Phil and Shirley went down to Mid's.

Jan. 17, Friday: Pleasant (33). I took up one of my traps. Mid and I went sledding down on Alvin's Hill. We went awful fast. I went skating and skiing in P.M. Earl and Annie[44] came up in P.M. Earl told lots of interesting things to tell. He said that a man killed one nigger and wounded another because they disobeyed orders.

Jan. 18, Saturday: Pleasant (35). I took up all the traps but one. I gave Papa some candy for birthday present. I made and fried doughnuts. Mid and Alice came up in P.M. Mid and I went sliding. Had a rook party for Papa's birthday. Mama made fudge.

Jan. 19, Sunday: Stormy (30). It snowed hard in A.M. Mama and Aunt Dora went to church. I took a trap. I read in P.M.

Jan. 20, Monday: Pleasant (38). We started in to go to school. Agnes Fuller is our teacher. There is a new girl at school. She is a peach. Miss Barns is the music teacher. I got a price list from Tustune. They give very high prices.

Jan. 21, Tuesday: Warm. We went to school. We went sliding at noon. Had a good time. Papa hauled wood for our own use.

Jan. 22, Wednesday: Warm. Went to school. Teacher has it fixed now so that the smartest ones are in back. I am third from the back. Mid had his father take his sled down to the village. We went sliding at noon. Mid's fur book and price-list from Rogers came. They give awful high prices.

Jan. 23, Thursday: Warm. We went to school. Rose Witham is our teacher. It is dandy snowballing. We went sliding at noon. We saw some coon tracks that had come out on account of the warm weather.

Jan. 24, Friday: Stormy. It rained hard in A.M. The school didn't keep on account of the rain. Mid let me take his fur book. I went down to Mid's in P.M. We picked over beans in P.M.

Jan. 25, Saturday: Cold. It is froze up hard and rough. We went sliding in A.M. There is lots of ice. Papa went down to Alie Cairne's to saw wood. Mama and I went to town in P.M. and changed libery books. I bee-waxed some traps.

Jan. 26, Sunday: Warm. We went to church. It is awful icey. We went sliding in P.M. It is very good.

Jan. 27, Monday: Cool. Went to school. There is a place down there where there is a lot of ice and we skated on it.

Jan. 28, Tuesday: Cool. Went to school. We went down on ice and watched them roll logs over bank. We slid on the ice. It snowed some. Papa split wood for Alie Cairns. Papa cut ice for Carins.

Jan. 29, Wednesday: Warm. Went to school. We played on ice. Mid kissed Ted. We slid down over bank on our pants. Papa sawed wood.

Jan. 30, Thursday: Warm. Went to school. We played on ice. We went clear up the river and Hen found some smelling salts and made some girls smell of them. They smell bad. I hugged Teddy.

Jan. 31, Friday: Cold. We went to school. We had a history test. It snowed in morning. Papa and I went to basketball game at Norway. Norway beat one game and lost the other. Got home at 11:30.

February

Feb. 1, Saturday: Cool. We cut wood in A.M. I cut my rubber in four places and broke my ax handle. Mama went to village and changed libery books. Papa hauled wood in P.M. I went down to Millard's to get some bones ground. I slid a little.

Feb. 2, Sunday: Warm. Mama and Alice went to church. We went sliding. It is very good. We went down on little ice pond in P.M. I broke the front of my sled. We popped corn in eve.

Feb. 3, Monday: Warm. Went to school. We played on ice. I slid some on ice. Marian Wheeler got hurt. We went down on river at noon.

Feb. 4, Tuesday: Warm. Went to school. I didn't feel very well. We went down on river at noon. We went clear up to upper cove. Alie Cairns drove at night.

Feb. 5, Wednesday: Warm. It snowed a little. We snowballed at school. Played on logs some. We are writing a competion on the World War. I missed a spelling word.

Feb. 6, Thursday: Warm. Went to school. We are writing a comisition. We skated. I have a sore lip. Papa hauled a load of hay.

Feb. 7, Friday: Warm. Went to school. Saw lots of tracks. I finished my comisition. Shirley cut his finger and had to go to the doctor. We made valentines in P.M. I made some at home in eve.

Feb. 8, Saturday: Very warm. I skied a little in morning. It is very good. We sawed wood most of the time. Mama changed the libery books in P.M.

Feb. 9, Sunday: Warm. We went to church. Mid came up in P.M. and we went sliding. I read some. I pasted pictures.

Feb. 10, Monday: Warm. We went to school. We have a valentine box at school. I had a dollar bill changed and bought some valentines. I bought some paper at Dem. office. I had some fun with Edna in P.M.

Feb. 11, Tuesday: Cool, fair. Went to school. We played on ice. Millard laid in Lulue's lap a lot. I bought some valentines. It is good sliding.

Feb. 12, Wednesday: Cool, fair. We played on ice. Dale and Robert had a fight. I wrote "You have captured my heart" on a red heart and gave it to Edna.

Feb. 13, Thursday: Warm. Went to school. Millard kissed Edna. I should like to. I wrote two notes to Edna. We had a History test. A girl took most of Howard Rogers' dinner. I had a fur book come from Taylors. There was a church supper but we didn't go because Papa was hauling on the Milletville[45] lot and had to wait two hours to get his load scaled and got home too late. I missed in spelling because I didn't dot an i. We played on ice. Mid gave Gladis a valentine.

Feb. 14, Friday: Warm. Went to school. Papa hauled logs from the Milletville lot. It snowed in P.M. We had a valentine box. I got four. Edna got 21. I gave her 3. Edna and I sat together in P.M. We went to social in eve. Edna promised most everything to Lester.

Feb. 15, Saturday: Fair, very warm. Papa hauled logs from Milletville lot. I went skiing in A.M. It was good snowballing. Mid came up in P.M. Mama changed libery books and got me some new rubbers.

Feb. 16, Sunday: Cool. Mama and Aunt Mary went to church. I fixed my skiis by putting on some new grips. I found some weasel holes and set traps there. I read in P.M.

Feb. 17, Monday: Cool. Went to school. I bought some babies [candy] and gave them to Edna. We went up to Station at noon. Some Canadians went up the line. Papa hauled logs.

Feb. 18, Tuesday: Cool. Went to school. Papa hauled logs. We are having percentage. We played on logs down to school. We slid at night.

Feb. 19, Wednesday: Cool. Went to school. Edna is mad at Mid. We played on logs. We got jumped on ice on a sled and landed in a puddle. We had to stand beside the steam pipes. Mama visited school. I left my dinner pail down on the sidewalk.

Feb. 20, Thursday: Cool. Went to school. We had two tests. That is the only things we had. Edna tumbled down between the sides on a logging sled and I rescued her. Aunt Mary went down to Aunt Dora's.

Feb. 21, Friday: Warm. Went to school. We had a history test and a spelling test. I got 70 in spelling test. Edna got 68. We went upstairs in P.M. and had some exercise. Dale played violin and Henry and Philip Plummer played piano. Helen Judd came over. We played games in eve.

Feb. 22, Saturday: Warm. I carried milk to village and tried to get my bank book fixed but it wasn't open. I left libery books at Aunt Dora's. We sawed wood in P.M. We went out as far as schoolhouse with Helen Judd. Mid, Helen, and Ruth came up and went sliding in P.M., but I had to saw wood. I was sick and vomited in eve.

Feb. 23, Sunday: Snow. It snowed hard all day. We didn't go to church. I read in A.M. Went out and played in snow. I got wet.

Feb. 24, Monday: Very windy. The snow blowed awful hard. the school team didn't come in. Mid came up and we played games. We went out in barn. Papa broke out road in P.M. There are great big drifts.

Feb. 25, Tuesday: Hot. We went to school. The school team couldn't get in, so John drove us out to the corner with the double team. The horses got in clear to the backs, but we got through. We went over on the river bank and slid down over on our pants. I slid once. It is awful hot. I most roasted. It is good snowballing.

Feb. 26, Wednesday: Snowed and blowed. I didn't go to school because I had a bad cold. I had to stay in house all day. It snowed in A.M. and blowed in P.M. We made candy in P.M. Papa went to village in A.M.

Feb. 27, Thursday: Warm. Went to school. Papa hauled logs from Milletville lot. It has drifted some. The boys slid down over the bank on their pants.

Feb. 28, Friday: Warm. Papa hauled logs. I got my haircut. Mama went to village. The fellows rasceld at noon. Mama carried Aunt Mary down to village.

March

March 1, Saturday: Rained. Papa carried milk in A.M. It rained hard most all day. We picked over apples in P.M.

March 2, Sunday: Warm. Bernice was sick. Mama didn't go to church. John went down and got Aunt Mary. I read.

March 3, Monday: Warm. Went to school. We snowballed. Saw a lot of crows.

March 4, Tuesday: Hot. Went to school. We saw a lot of crows. Marian said she saw a robin, but I don't believe it. I went sliding on crust in morning.

March 5, Wednesday: Warm. Went to school. There was no crust. We tried to see who could get the smallest apple. Howard didn't bring any and Millard's and mine were the same size. Millard had to change his seat down front.

March 6, Thursday: Warm. Went to school. The teacher Miss Fuller, gave Albert Martin a licking for acting bad. We snapped alasticks at school. The fellows got wet.

March 7, Friday: Hot. Went to school. The Fellows got awful wet. Some tumbled down in water 2 feet deep. 3 had to go home. Wallace W. took off his shoes and stockings and ran around on the logs. We had a spelling match. Millard has a headache.

March 8, Saturday: Warm. It was dandy sliding on crusts. We went awful fast. We sawed wood in P.M. Mama changed libery books.

March 9, Sunday: Stormy. It stormed all day. We didn't go to church. It rained in P.M.

March 10, Monday: Warm. We went to school. The schoolyard is dried off a little. We rode to school with Freal.

March 11, Tuesday: Cool. Went to school. Alton Ames kissed Edna. There is a lot of bare ground.

March 12, Wednesday: Warm. Went to school. Millard went down to Lewiston. It is hard going. Frank came with wagon at night. We went home with Mama.

March 13, Thursday: Cold. Went to school. I stayed down to Aunt Affia's all night to go to a Sunday school party. We had a good time having ice-cream and two kinds of cake for refreshments. I helped make the ice-c. They were all there. We played winkum and other games. Had to write a story at school. [Indecipherable] came with wagon.

March 14, Friday: Cool. Hen Swett and I slid some on crust. We went fast. We made things after recess. Edna set with me. We went sliding at night. There was a social but I didn't go.

March 15, Saturday: Warm. Mid came up and we played ball. We went sliding on crust. It is awful jounsty. I went down to Mid's in P.M. and we played ball.

March 16, Sunday: Cool. We went to church. It snowed and rained in P.M. I read and popped corn in P.M.

March 17, Monday: Cloudy. Went to school. We played marbles. I didn't have any. The boys all kissed Edna at noon.

March 18, Tuesday: Rained. Went to school. We played marbles. I came out with more than I started in with. We heard that next year being in the eighth grade we are going over to high school and stay there all day. There ain't going to be any ninth grade. It rained hard. He [illegible] took up part way in the auto.

March 19, Wednesday: Fair. We went to school. We played marbles. I won a lot in A.M. and lost a lot in P.M. Mid lost about 40. I came out about the same. Mid had got some steers he is going to raise. I was going down to Mid's and stay all night, but it was too wet. They all came up here and did a little about settling up [the estate of Gramy Mary Parsons].

March 20, Thursday: Fair. Went to school. We played marbles. I lost 9. It is hot. The mud is awful bad. Mid and I walked as far as brook. The mud is as high as the axle.

March 21, Friday: Hot. Went to school. Played marbles. Some played ball. I went down to Millard's and stayed all night. We played ball and other games.

March 22, Saturday: Cool. Mid and I let his steers out. Freal has made a yoke for them. Papa carried milk to town. We cut wood in P.M. I broke my axe handle.

March 23, Sunday: Rainy. Mama went to church. It rained hard all day.

March 24, Monday: Warm. Went to school. They are playing marbles now. The schoolyard is most dried off.

March 25, Tuesday: Cool. Went to school. They are playing ball now. I took my mitt.

March 26, Wednesday: Hot. Went to school. Mid bought a new dollar mitt. Had two tests.

March 27, Thursday: Warm. Went to school. Had two tests. After we got through we played games. It is muddy.

March 28, Friday: Rained. It rained so hard that Mid and I were the only ones that went. It rained awful hard and we got wet. School closed at noon. I went up to Aunt Afia's and stayed all night and went to the drama. I stayed and watched part of dance. I sat beside Lillian Judkins. She is awful pretty. Got home 11:30. Wrote on typewriter in P.M.

March 29, Saturday: Rained. It rained hard all day. I used typewriter and read at Aunt Afia's. I went home with John. Went out in barn in P.M.

March 30, Sunday: Snowy. It snowed hard all day. I read. There is three inches of snow.

March 31, Monday: Fair. It is vacation now. Papa went down and sawed Freal's wood. I went out to corner and got mail and he gave me 15 cents. I am going to all the week. Mama and Aunt Mary dressed up like tramps and went down to Alice's. They didn't know them at first. Got 23 eggs.

April

April 1, Tuesday: Cool. We cut wood down by young orchard. Freal and Mid came up. Freal and Rose are at Alice's. Papa took the two calfs to village. Papa got the mail but I got the 15 cents. Papa got me a new ax handle. Papa tapped a tree so we could have some sap to drink.

April 2, Wednesday: Cool. We cut wood. I went out after mail. Got 15 cents for it. The wind blowed hard. Phil has the earache.

April 3, Thursday: Warm. Papa went to village. Phil had the earache awful hard. I went down to icepond and saw some mink and muskrat tracks. Papa didn't see the mail man and he came in. I went down to Alice's and got some cloroform for Phil's ear. A soar burst in Phil's ear. Cut wood in P.M.

April 4, Friday: Cloudy. Rained some. Phil had the earache awful. We cut wood in P.M. Papa hauled up some logs. The sap run good.

April 5, Saturday: Rainy. I carried milk to the village in P.M. We had some little pigs. There was 8. I went to village with Mama in P.M. Papa is going to borrow $3000

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March 29, Saturday: Rained. It rained hard all day. I used typewriter and read at Aunt Afia's. I went home with John. Went out in barn in P.M.

March 30, Sunday: Snowy. It snowed hard all day. I read. There is three inches of snow.

March 31, Monday: Fair. It is vacation now. Papa went down and sawed Freal's wood. I went out to corner and got mail and he gave me 15 cents. I am going to all the week. Mama and Aunt Mary dressed up like tramps and went down to Alice's. They didn't know them at first. Got 23 eggs.

April

April 1, Tuesday: Cool. We cut wood down by young orchard. Freal and Mid came up. Freal and Rose are at Alice's. Papa took the two calfs to village. Papa got the mail but I got the 15 cents. Papa got me a new ax handle. Papa tapped a tree so we could have some sap to drink.

April 2, Wednesday: Cool. We cut wood. I went out after mail. Got 15 cents for it. The wind blowed hard. Phil has the earache.

April 3, Thursday: Warm. Papa went to village. Phil had the earache awful hard. I went down to icepond and saw some mink and muskrat tracks. Papa didn't see the mail man and he came in. I went down to Alice's and got some cloroform for Phil's ear. A soar burst in Phil's ear. Cut wood in P.M.

April 4, Friday: Cloudy. Rained some. Phil had the earache awful. We cut wood in P.M. Papa hauled up some logs. The sap run good.

April 5, Saturday: Rainy. I carried milk to the village in P.M. We had some little pigs. There was 8. I went to village with Mama in P.M. Papa is going to borrow $3000

from Biddles [to buy out his sisters' shares of the farm]. Mama got some stuff for Phil's earache but it don't do much good. Papa took two little pigs in the house.

April 6, Sunday: Warm. We didn't go to church because Phil had the earache. Aunt Mary and Mama went for a walk up towards Knights and I climbed a tree and scared them. The doctor came up and gave Phil some powders.

April 7, Monday: Warm. Went to school. Played ball at school. It is awful muddy. Phil has still got the earache. Threw sticks at him.

April 8, Tuesday: Hot. Went to school. We played scrub at noon. We beat. Bought a tablet.

April 9, Wednesday: Hot. Played scrub at school. We beat. Mid got hit in the eye with a ball and had to go to the doctors. Played ball at night.

April 10, Thursday: Cool. Went to school. Played scrub at noon. We beat 6 to one. Millard didn't go to school. It rained some.

April 11, Friday: Fair. Went to school. Didn't take my glove. Played ball at noon. Millard didn't go to school. Had drawing lessons in P.M. Edna and I held hands.

April 12, Saturday: Hot. I carried milk to town in A.M. The Grammar school played Norway G. school and beat 14 to 2. We knocked cow chips in P.M. Played ball with Mid after we got through. I saw Edna at village and had a talk with her. Mid and I went after Mayflowers and got some buds.

April 13, Sunday: Warm. Went to church. Had a new minister. It is quite muddy. Went up by Knight's and got some Mayflower buds. Some boys came up here for a walk and got a drink of water.

April 20, Sunday: Warm. Went to church. Went down to the woods and saw a hedgehog.

April 25, Friday: Snowed. Went to school. It snowed some. I have got some seeds up an inch high in the house.

May

May 10, Saturday: Cool. Carried milk to village with Rocket and had my tooth filled. Mid and I went fishing in P.M. and I got one 8 inches and one 6. Mid got four smaller. We roasted one and ate him. South Paris grammer school beat Canton 9 to nothing.

May 11, Sunday: It rained a lot. Wrote a letter to Wideawakes.

Miscellaneous notes at end of diary

Where to Find Flowers

There are white violets down by the frog pond and blue violets down back of the barn and down in our field side of the cow pasture.

There is gold thread down near the frog pond.

There are wild oats, white triluims, red trilume, Solomons seal, twisted stalks, ground nut, wild honeysuckle, Jack and the pulpit, swamp maple, foam flower, running raspberry, wild bean berry, star flower, and lily of the valley down in the sap camp woods.

There is mouse earred chickweed down in the ox pasture near the bars and in the pig pen.

There is bird on wing or babies toes down toward the town farm below the upper bars.

There is bunch berry blossom and bluets down in the field side of the sap camp woods.

There is shepherds purse down in the ox pasture near the upper bars.

It takes two rolls and a half roll of wallpaper for the dining room.

How to make paper things in *Youth's Companion* for Dec. 5, 1918.

Our eyes have met,
Our lips not yet,
But Oh you kid,
I'll get you yet.

Peanut Molasses Candy
2 cups molasses, 1 tbsp. vinegar
1 tbsp. butter, 1/2 cup peanuts
Mix molasses, vinegar, and butter.
Cook without stirring until it clicks or cracks when tested in cold water.
Pour into well buttered platter or shallow pan.
When cold enough to handle, add the peanuts chopped
and 1 tbsp. vanilla and pull until light colored and stiff.
Cut into two inch lengths and wrap in waxed paper.

About baseball in *Youth's Companion* for May 8, 1919 and in March 8, 1917.

Wallace Ripley's birthday April 30.

DIARY 1922

by Merton S. Parsons

CAST OF CHARACTERS (In order of appearance)

The Author: Merton S. Parsons, aged 14/15
Ed Green: A local man
Kit: ?
Prince: A family dog
The Cliffords: Aunt Apphia and Uncle Wallace Clifford, and family
Ralph Davis: A neighbor, sometimes referred to as "Sliptoe"
Papa: Oscar W. Parsons, aged 43. Died Sept. 13, 1922
Lee: Lee Dudley, a neighbor
Wallace: Wallace Ripley, a neighbor and former hired-man
Jimmy: ?
Phil: Philip S. Parsons, Merton's brother, aged 10
M. Morris: ?
Rocket: A driving horse at the farm
Marion C.: A neighbor
Percy: ?
Eddie: ?
Lydia S.: Lydia Swett, aged 15, a neighbor
Cush: A friend
J. Raymond: A friend
Taps: A horse at the farm; also called "Tapsey"
Doris J.: Doris Judd, a neighbor and friend
H. Porter: A neighbor
Aunt Annie: Annie I. Parsons, aged 53
Carrie C.: Carrie Clifford, Merton's cousin, aged 34
Mary: Mary Clifford, Merton's cousin, aged 24
Harry Cole: Local law-enforcement officer
Hen: Henry Plummer, a school friend of Merton
Mame: ? [Maybe Mrs. Alvin Lovejoy?]
Helen C. Maxim: A neighbor
Arthur W.: Arthur Woodworth, a school friend
Fred N.: Fred North, a neighbor
Stantons: Charles Stanton, a neighbor
Dale Allen: A friend

January

Jan. 1, Sunday: Went to church. Ed Green is teacher. Read in P.M. "The Honor of the Big Snow." Went over to hilltop in P.M.

Jan. 2, Monday: Very cold, 10 below. Went to school with Kit. We have a dog Prince from Cliffords, a kitten from Ralph Davis.

Jan. 3, Tuesday: Very cold in A.M., 20 below. Went to school with our horse. Papa and I do chores alone now [because Uncle John and Wallace Ripley had left]. Milking 8.

Jan. 30, Monday: Went to school.

Jan. 31, Tuesday: Mid-term exams begin tomorrow. I don't have to take any. Warm. Lee worked for Papa cutting poplar.

February

Feb. 1, Wednesday: Wallace bought new horse at Norway. Jimmy there now. Cut poplar in 60 acre lot.

Feb. 2, Thursday: Rained in A.M. In P.M. Papa went above Finn school and bought a dandy new horse: $240. Warm.

Feb. 3, Friday: Warm. Twitched logs to loading place with new horse. He works fine. Papa hauled a load in P.M.

Feb. 4, Saturday: Cool. In A.M. Papa, I, and Phil went to town. Phil and I bagged sawdust at Kenney's mill. Papa went to Farmers Union Meeting.

Feb. 12, Sunday: Having a moderate winter.

Feb. 13, Monday: Have good time reading magazine at school noons.

Feb. 27, Monday: Snowed. Had first training class meeting at M. Morris.

March

March 1, Wednesday: Lee got home from hospital. Had operation for hernia and pendicitus. All right now. Went to school.

March 2, Thursday: Lee came up in P.M. Went to school with Rocket. Snowed hard all A.M.

March 3, Friday: Marian C. got another baby girl. Went up in both new blocks. Percy and Eddie got through cutting.

April

April 9, Sunday: Still going to school with Lydia S.

May

May 9, Wednesday: Lots of rain this spring. Much different than last year. The Mississippi and other rivers have flooded and destroyed land and houses. Rather bad year for crops. Radio is the craze now and I am interested. Cush has a set in Shaw's store and gets lots of stuff. J. Raymond has one at W. Paris.

May 14, Monday: The Finn horse Tapsey is scared of spray pump for spraying apple trees and ran away while putting on dormant and smashed a few things.

May 16, Wednesday: Put on both dormant and petal spray this year, except petal on town farm road and pig pen.

June

June 8, Thursday: Warm. Gave Doris J. a ride home in P.M. coming home from school.

June 9, Friday: Hot. Got excused from exams and so did B.P.[46] Have finished 2nd year and still feel young. Hauled in wood. Have taken one year of French and 2 of Latin.

June 15, Thursday: Went to a dusting demonstration at H. Porter's orchard on High St. Worked good.

June 19, Monday: Hoeing and thinning corn now. Got 3 acres. Rather poor crop year. Too wet.

June 28, Wednesday: Went to B. and B. Ring. Bros. Circus, Lewiston. Biggest in world. Good time.

July

July 4, Tuesday: Went to Fair grounds. Parade, pageant, ball games, fireworks, etc.

July 10, Monday: Aunt Annie came.

July 16, Sunday: Carrie C. and Mary are here now.

July 18, Tuesday: Haying now. Good weather. I run the machine some this year. Lee is helping us. Lee has been selling cider some and Harry Cole [local sherrif] came up to see about it, but did nothing. (Written Aug. 14).

July 28, Friday: Aunt Annie went back.

July 30, Sunday: Whole family went to church. Mr. Morris' last Sunday. Big crowd.

August

Aug. 1, Tuesday: The summer seems to pass fast and the days are getting shorter. Had to plow under one piece of corn because of thick hale. Seeded it to millet.

Aug. 3, Thursday: Began haying for Lee. Finished all of ours except 12-acre field and roadsides and orchard. Wallace has Hen and Mid helping him.

Aug. 6, Sunday: Hot. The radio works fine. Went to church. Hauled hay in forenoon.

Aug. 9, Wednesday: The Red Astriean [Astracon] apples are good now. Prince has got 23 wood chucks.

Aug. 10, Thursday: Helped Lee. His mother-in-law has arrived and he is feeling blew.

Aug. 11, Friday: Finished Lee's haying except one load. Mid went to Cornish with Mame.

Aug. 12, Saturday: Cool. Got in half of 12-acre field. Most done now. Lee helped. Helen C. Maxim got a baby boy.

Aug. 13, Sunday: Went for a ride. Oxford, Pleasant Pond, dinner, bathing. Cascoy Lake Tripp.

Aug. 14, Monday: Hot (96). Mowed lower end of 12-acre field in P.M. except small piece. Prince got his 24th.

Aug. 15, Tuesday: Hot. Got in hay in Young Orchard and 12-acre field. Lee helped us in A.M. and Wallace in P.M.

Aug. 16, Wednesday: Pa mowed side of road and swale towards town. Plums getting ripe. Picked Red Ast.

Aug. 17, Thursday: Got in the hay in the swale and road towards town. Augusta beat TT 7-1.

Aug. 18, Friday: Cloudy. Went to Lewiston. Got me a suit with long pants. Went out to lake grove.

Aug. 19, Saturday: Cut weeds in A.M. Went to big ball tournament in P.M. Twin Town beat and disbanded. Augusta won finally.

Aug. 20, Sunday: Warm. In P.M. Mid, Arthur W., and I went to Hud's and hauled Fred N.'s mower off into the woods.

Aug. 21, Monday: Cool and windy. Cut the oats in the Big Field in A.M. Fred N. came down and asked about the mower.

Aug. 22, Tuesday: Mid came up and helped cut weeds in corn. Turned the oats in P.M. Warm.

Aug. 23, Wednesday: Grange and Farm Bureau field day at fair grounds. Went and played ball. Met a Brown boy.

Aug. 24, Thursday: Warm and fair. Mowed oats in South Field in A.M. and got in 3 loads from Big Field in P.M.

Aug. 25, Friday: Cloudy and rainy. We caught the two calves that got into Stanton's and put them back.

Aug. 26, Saturday: Showery. Went to ball game in P.M. at fair grounds. Ward 8 vs. Oxford. Oxford beat 5-2. Dale Allen played ss. for 8.

[editor's note: several pages are missing at this point. They were removed by my mother at the time we found Dad's diaries in 1950 in order to spare us kids the unpleasant recorded details concerning Oscar Parsons' death by suicide on Sept. 13, 1922.[47] Mom's recollections, in Dec. 1986, of what was contained in these pages are as follows:

"Dad feels mean. He has a sore on his upper lip."
"Dad worse. He may have to go to the hospital."
[a few days later, after the suicide]: "Poor Dad, I loved him so much …"
"There were a lot of people at the funeral."]

Note at end of diary

To find the wt. of a fish, square the girth in inches, multiply the results by length in inches, and divide result by 800.

DIARY 1923

by Merton S. Parsons

March

March 21: Joined Scouts.

April

April 8: Went down to Cush's and finished radio. Tried at night. Got Wgy. 1 tube W.D. 11.
April 10: Got WHAZ.
April 12: Got PWX, Cuba.
April 26: Radio works good all time now. Get WDAS, Chicago quite often. Heard Gov. N.W. and Pres. Harding, I think, from New York. Have heard 15-20 stations. Dramas, music, everything.

May

May 1: Got Chevrolet.
May 18: Radio hasn't worked so well lately, since May 15. Too Warm.
May 27: Planted 1/4 a. potatoes, tuber unit, club.

June

June 21: Got acre of potatoes, yellow corn, and beans in South Field No. 1.
June 30: Built radio cabinet. Rainy. Working for Goldsmith some. Got my potatoes all hoed.

July

July 6: Went around White Mts. on the 4th. Turn Mt., Crawford Notch. Took about 9 hrs. I drove half way. Went 35. Lots of people in the mts. waved hands, etc.

IV. Diary 1916

by John T. Parsons

CAST OF CHARACTERS (In order of appearance)

The Author: John Thomas Parsons, age 49. Living at the farm, where he worked as hired man. Unmarried older brother of Oscar W. Parsons (see below).

Mrs. Cummings: Alice Cummings, a neighbor. Wife of Freeland Cummings (see below).

C. F. Swett: Charles F. Swett, a neighbor on a nearby farm located off the S. Paris road, approximately the same age as JTP.

Freeland Cummings: A neighbor on a nearby farm on the Sunset Road, approximately the same age as JTP.

Oscar: Oscar Wallace Parsons (1879-1922). JTP's younger brother, and principal farm manager. Husband of Luella, and father of Merton, Bernice, Philip, and Shirley.

Lee Dudley: A neighbor, living on a farm on the Sunset Road, somewhat younger than JTP.

Charles Dudley: ?

Wallace Clifford: Wallace K. Clifford (1862-1926). John's brother-in-law, husband of Apphia Parsons Clifford, John's sister. Lived with his family in South Paris.

Mr. Rich: Probably Horace Rich (1848-1917), father of Luella Rich Parsons, wife of Oscar W. Parsons, living in Oxford.

E. Twitchell: ? Apparently a local apple dealer.

Dr. Merrill: Local veterinarian.

January

Thursday, Jan. 13: + 32 F, rainy. It rained all day and covered the trees with sleet. Packed ice in the forenoon; in the afternoon I went to the village with the milk.

Friday, Jan. 14: -9 F, fair. Yarded out cordwood in the forenoon. I cut a few bolts in the afternoon and helped to haul up wood to the house.

Sat., Jan. 15: -14 F, fair. Yarded out bolts in the forenoon; finished in the afternoon and hauled up some wood.

Sun. Jan. 16: +14 F, fair. Did not go to church today. Read the most of the day.

Mon., Jan. 17: 0 F, fair. Went to the village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon I cut timber.

Tue., Jan. 18: -21 F, fair. Worked cutting timber all day.

Wed., Jan. 19: -6 F, fair. Worked cutting timber all day.

Thurs., Jan. 20: Stormy PM. Went down with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon cut timber until three o'clock; then went home as it was snowing. Helped load the double team in the afternoon.

Fri., Jan. 21: +28 F, fair. Cut lumber and firewood all day. Weather looks like rain.

Sat., Jan. 22: +28 F, foggy. Worked about the house carpentering all day. The weather was rather wet to work out doors.

Sun., Jan. 23: Fair. Went to church. The weather was clear and cold.

Mon., Jan. 24: +10 F, fair. Worked all day on bolts and lumber, the weather being rather mild for season.

Tue., Jan. 25: +21 F, fair. Saw a crow. The weather being mild. Cut wood and timber all day.

Wed., Jan. 26: +32 F, +48 F, fair. Went to village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon I split 4 ft. wood. The weather being mild, the sledding is going very fast; it has been thawing for the last three days.

Thurs., Jan. 27: Foggy. We hauled up firewood in the forenoon; in the afternoon we picked over beans. The weather continues mild and the sledding is nearly gone.

Fri., Jan. 28: +10 F, foggy. I split up some 4 ft. wood in the forenoon; in the afternoon we cut some lumber and 4 ft. wood. The weather cleared and became windy and colder, the vane pointing northwest.

Sat., Jan. 29: -4 F, fair. Cut four foot wood all day. The team went to Cape with a load of logs in the afternoon, though the sledding is very poor.

Sun., Jan. 30: +9 F, fair. Went to church in the forenoon. Read in the afternoon.

Mon., Jan. 31: +18 F, foggy. Cut bolts and wood all day. The sledding is all gone on account of the thaw.

February

Tue., Feb. 1: +10 F, +48 F, fair. Cut bolts and wood all day. There are indications of a snowstorm. Mail man came with a wagon today; it is very unusual to use wheels at this time of the year.

Wed., Feb. 2: +10 F, stormy. Worked cutting bolts and wood in forenoon; in the afternoon it stormed and we picked over potatoes.

Thurs., Feb. 3: Stormy. Went to the village in the forenoon; in the afternoon the weather cleared up so that I worked cutting bolts and timber. There is nearly enough snow for sleighing.

Fri., Feb. 4: 0 F, fair. Cut timber all day.

Sat., Feb. 5: +10 F, fair. Went to village in the forenoon with the milk; in the afternoon I cut timber.

Sun., Feb. 6: +8 F, fair. Did not go to church today. Read nearly all day.

Mon., Feb. 7: +32 F, fair. We had about 4 inches of damp snow last night, which will make fair sleighing. Went to village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon I cut bolts and firewood.

Tue., Feb. 8: -9 F, fair. Wind is blowing very hard from the northwest, making it very disagreeable. Worked most of the day cutting wood and bolts.

Wed., Feb. 9: -2 F, stormy. Worked all day cutting bolts and wood.

Thurs., Feb. 10: +10 F, fair. Worked all day cutting bolts and wood.

Fri., Feb. 11: -5 F, fair. Worked cutting bolts in the forenoon; in the afternoon went to the village with the milk.

Sat., Feb. 12: 0 F, fair. Worked cutting wood in forenoon; in the afternoon hauled up wood. We finished down in the 60 acre lot.

Sun., Feb. 13: -5 F, stormy. Did not go to church today. Read most of the day.

Mon., Feb. 14: -21 F, fair. Worked around the house all day; sawed wood in the forenoon; in the afternoon made some gutters.

Tue., Feb. 15: -20 F, fair. Worked cutting pine most of the day. The weather was moderated so that it is comfortable.

Wed., Feb. 16: -2 F, fair. Worked cutting pine all day.

Thurs., Feb. 17: +10 F, fair. Went to village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon cut pine lumber. Went to a concert in the I.O.O.F. [International Order of Odd Fellows] Hall in the evening.

Fri., Feb. 18: +10 F, foggy. Worked cutting pine lumber. Went to the K. of P. [Knights of Phythias] banquet in the evening. The afternoon was stormy.

Sat., Feb. 19: +3 F, stormy. Worked around the house in the forenoon; in the afternoon cut pine lumber.

Sun., Feb. 20: -18 F, fair. It was so cold that we did not attend church.

Mon., Feb. 21: -23 F, fair. Did not go to the woods in the forenoon; in the afternoon cut pine timber.

Tue., Feb. 22: -2 F, fair. Went to village with milk in the forenoon; in afternoon worked on pine.

Wed., Feb. 23: Stormy. Did not go to the woods in the forenoon, but worked around the house; in the afternoon worked on pine.

Thurs., Feb. 24: -2 F, fair. Went down with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked on pine bolts.

Fri., Feb. 25: +16 F, stormy. Worked around the house in the forenoon. In the afternoon worked cutting bolts.

Sat., Feb. 26: +32 F, stormy. Went to village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon we picked over beans. It has rained all day.
Sun., Feb. 27: +18 F, stormy. Did not go to church today.
Mon., Feb. 28: -12 F. Worked on pine all day.
Tue., Feb. 29: -8 F, fair. Worked swamping roads and cutting pine all day.

March

Wed., March 1: -8 F, fair. Worked cutting pine all day.
Thurs., March 2: -2 F, stormy. Went to village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon I worked cutting pine.
Fri., March 3: -2 F, fair. Worked cutting pine all day.
Sat., March 4: +5 F, stormy. Worked cutting pine lumber all day.
Sun., March 5: +2 F, fair. Went to church today.
Mon., March 6: -3 F, fair. Went to Town-meeting today all day.
Tue., March 7: +10 F, stormy. Worked around the house in the forenoon; as it did not clear up in the afternoon, did not go to the woods
Wed., March 8: +10 F, stormy. Worked cutting pine all day. The storm became violent in the afternoon and a large amount of snow fell.
Thurs., March 9: +10 F, stormy. Saw first crow for the spring. We broke roads in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked on wood.
Fri., March 10: +10 F, fair. Worked on timber in the forenoon; in the afternoon went to the village with the milk.
Sat., March 11: +4 F, fair. Worked on timber all day. Saw some Tree sparrows.
Sun., March 12: -4 F, fair. As the roads were poor, I did not go to church today.
Mon., March 13: +10 F, stormy. Worked around the house as it was too stormy to go to the woods.
Tue., March 14: +10 F, fair. Broke out the roads in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked cutting pine bolts.
Wed., March 15: +8 F, stormy. Went to village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked around the house. Saw a Snow Bunting.
Thurs., March 16: +4 F, stormy. Worked nearly all day breaking roads.
Fri., March 17: -2 F, fair. Went to the village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked around the house.
Sat., March 18: -12 F, fair. Worked in the woods nearly all day.
Sun., March 19: 0 F, fair. Went to church today.
Mon., March 20: -4 F, fair.
Tue., March 21: -2 F, fair.
Wed., March 22: +12 F, stormy. Went to the village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked in the woods and on the woodpile.
Thurs., March 23: +12 F, fair. We finished hauling up firewood today; broke out the road in the morning.
Fri., March 24: +12 F, fair. We sawed up the most of our woodpile with the engine.

Sat., March 25: +24 F, +44 F, fair. Worked on woodpile in the forenoon; in the afternoon we tapped trees. The trees ran very well; we got a little over half of them tapped.

Sun., March 26: +32 F, +54 F, fair. Did not go to church today. The sap ran very well today.

Mon., March 27: +24 F, +50 F, fair. Finished tapping trees in the forenoon; in the afternoon we collected the sap and began boiling it down. First Bluebirds seen by Mrs. Cummings.

Tue., March 28: +28 F, fair. Worked on the woodpile all day.

Wed., March 29: +29 F, fair. Worked on the woodpile in the forenoon; in the afternoon we collected sap and boiled it down.

Thurs., March 30: +32 F, fair. Went down to the village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked on the woodpile.

Fri., March 31: +34 F, fair. Worked shovelling out snowdrifts in the forenoon; in the afternoon finished sawing up C. F. Swett's woodpile. Saw first Bluebird.

April

Sat., April 1: +32 F, fair. Collected sap in the forenoon and boiled till 2 o'clock. Then finished sawing up woodpile. Saw first Robin today. The snow is about gone and people are using wheels. Snow began to go Mar. 25.

Sun., April 2: +36, fair. Did not go to church today. Saw some Black poncos.

Mon., April 3: +20 F, fair. Worked splitting wood all day. Heard a Red-tailed Hawk.

Tue., April 4: +22 F, stormy. Put away the sleds and collected sap in the forenoon; in the afternoon I boiled down sap.

Wed., April 5: +24 F, fair. Worked boiling sap all day. Collected sap in the forenoon.

Thurs., April 6: +28 F, fair. Worked boiling sap all day; collected sap in the afternoon. Saw first Peewee, also a Song sparrow.

Fri., April 7: +24 F, stormy. Boiled sap until about 3 o'clock and then worked on woodpile. Saw a Barred Owl and heard another.

Sat., April 8: +22 F, fair. Worked nearly all day on the woodpile. Collected sap the last part of the afternoon.

Sun., April 9: + 22 F, stormy. Did not go to church today as a severe storm is raging.

Mon., April 10: +20 F, fair. Went around and emptied the sap buckets in the morning; then worked splitting wood until about 3 o'clock when we gathered the sap.

Tue., April 11: +23 F, +48 F, fair. Boiled sap all the forenoon; in the afternoon split wood until half past 3 o'clock, when we gathered the sap.

Wed., April 12: +29 F, stormy. Worked all day boiling sap; the sap did not run any.

Thurs., April 13: +29 F, +52 F, fair. Worked all day splitting wood. The sap did not run much today as the ground froze only slightly last night.

Fri., April 14: +27, fair. Went to village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon I split wood far a while and then gathered sap and it began to storm along about 3 o'clock. We had a driving snow storm of about 5 inches.

Sat., April 15: +27, fair. Boiled sap all the forenoon; in the afternoon I split wood. Found a Pileated Woodpecker's nest well begun in a poplar stub.

Sun., April 16: +32 F, +68 F, fair. Did not go to church today as the going is not very good yet.

Mon., April 17: +33 F, +60 F, stormy. Split wood all day and finished the big wood pile. Saw a Barn Swallow and a Hermit Thrush.

Tue., April 18: +36 F, stormy. Collected sap buckets in the forenoon; in the afternoon hauled some wood to sap camp and split wood last part of day. End of sap season.

Wed., April 19: +31 F, fair. Went to Walker's Field Day; in the afternoon had a trap-shoot at the grounds near the Corn Shop [local canning factory in S. Paris]. I was high gun with a score of 19 out of 25 birds.

Thurs., April 20: +29 F, fair. Worked splitting up wood all day.

Fri., April 21: +35 F, +60 F, fair. Went to the village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked up wood down at the sap camp.

Sat., April 22: +38 F, fair. Wheeled in furnace wood all day; in the afternoon a drizzling rain set in.

Sun., April 23: +36 F, stormy. It rained all day, so I did not go to church.

Mon., April 24: +36 F, stormy. Went to the village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon we fixed the culvert down near Lee Dudley's. After that I wheeled in furnace wood. A drizzling rain is falling.

Tue., April 25: +34 F, +61 F, fair. In forenoon built staging up in the grain barn; in the afternoon worked repairing barn getting ready to put in paroid roofing.

Wed., April 26: +32 F, stormy. In forenoon moved the cream seperator and cleaned up the sap pans; in the afternoon wheeled in furnace wood and picked over beans. A drizzling rain is falling. The frost is not all out of the roads yet.

Thurs., April 27: +31 F, fair. Worked all day putting paroid roofing on the grain barn. Had Freeland Cummings to help us.

Fri., April 28: +32 F, stormy. Went down to the village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon wheeled in wood and worked inside. Fixed cream seperator and built a shelf in the pantry [Old Kitchen].

Sat., April 29: +31 F, fair. Worked all day in the grain barn. Oscar and Freeland were gone to the village in the forenoon; in the afternoon we put on roofing.

Sun., April 30: +34 F, fair. Did not go to church today. Saw a Winter wren and a Yellow palm warbler. We had a heavy frost this morning.

May

Mon., May 1: +36 F, fair. Went to the village with the milk in the forenoon. Arrived home about 10:30. In the afternoon we finished roofing the grain barn. Saw a White-throated sparrow and some Purple Finches.

Tue., May 2: +38 F, fair. Worked down cellar and wheeled in wood in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked with the team and hauled away the banking from the house and took two loads of wood down to the sap camp.

Wed., May 3: +39 F, fair. Worked all day hauling off stones. Lee helped me in the afternoon. The weather changed to rain along towards night.

Thurs., May 4: +41 F, fair. Hauled off rocks in the forenoon; in the afternoon hauled out manure.

Fri., May 5: +35 F, fair. Cut some cedar posts in the forenoon, also fixed the ox pasture fence; in the afternoon fixed fence. Went suckering [fishing for suckers] in the evening, brought home five suckers. Heard first Whippourwill.

Sat., May 6: +41 F, fair. Went to the village in the forenoon to have my teeth fixed; in the afternoon worked the horses on the wheel harrow and hauled off stones.

Sun., May 7: +42 F, +66 F, fair. Did not go to church today. We had a thunderstorm in the afternoon.

Mon., May 8: +44 F, fair. Worked harrowing in the forenoon; in the afternoon we hauled out manure.

Tue., May 9: +45 F, fair. Worked harrowing all day, used spring tooth disk and smoothing harrow. Saw a White-crowned Sparrow.

Wed., May 10: +33 F, fair. Worked building wire fence in the forenoon; in the afternoon looked over old fence. Put the young cattle out to pasture.

Thurs., May 11: +42 F, fair. Worked harrowing and rolled some ground that was seeded down in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked fixing cow pasture fence.

Fri., May 12: +40 F, fair. Finished new wire fence in forenoon; in the afternoon looked over old fence. We built about 60 rods of new wire fence this spring.

Sat., May 13: +38 F, fair. Worked hauling off stones in the forenoon; in the afternoon harrowed with smoothing harrow and hauled off stones for two hours. Put cows out to pasture.

Sun., May 14: +40 F, fair. Went to church today.

Mon., May 15: +43 F, fair. Worked all day picking rocks over in corner of the Big Field.

Tue., May 16: +40 F, rainy. Worked around the house in the forenoon; in the afternoon went down to the village after a load of sawdust.

Wed., May 17: +36 F, rainy. Worked most of the day shelling sweet corn to plant. The rain has washed the roads very badly.

Thurs., May 18: +38 F, rainy. Worked splitting and getting in furnace wood in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked on Aqueduct Hill.

Fri., May 19: +39 F, rainy. Worked all day on the road near Town Farm brook bridge. The storm did a large amount of damage on the roads.

Sat., May 20: +41 F, fair. Worked in forenoon getting in furnace wood; in the afternoon hauled off brush and stones.

Sun., May 21: +51 F, fair. Went to K. of P. [Knights of Pythias] sermon in the afternoon.

Mon., May 22: +42 F, fair. In forenoon fixed Horse pasture fence; in the afternoon worked with the wheel harrow.

Tue., May 23: +52 F, rainy. In forenoon hauled in furnace wood; in the afternoon we hauled out manure.

Wed., May 24: +41 F, fair. Hauled out manure in the forenoon; in the afternoon we hauled off stones for an hour or so, then wheeled in wood. Also wheeled in wood in forenoon while team was spreading manure.

Thurs., May 25: +49 F, fair. In the forenoon we hauled out manure; in the afternoon I harrowed.

Fri., May 26: +51 F, fair. Wheeled in stovewood in the forenoon; in the afternoon harrowed with the wheel harrow in the lower end of the Big Field.

Sat., May 27: +49 F, fair. Worked harrowing in the forenoon; in the afternoon we planted corn with the planter.

Sun., May 28: +49 F, rainy. Did not go to church today.

Mon., May 29: +51 F, fair. Went down to village in forenoon with cream; in the afternoon planted and covered potatoes. We got all our potatoes planted.

Tue., May 30: +53 F, rainy. Staid in the house in the forenoon; in the afternoon went down to the village to the G.A.R. [Grand Army of the Republic] exercises.

Wed., May 31: +53 F, fair. Went over to Swett's after a load of hay in the forenoon, then we hauled rocks the rest of the day over in the Big Field.

June

Thurs., June 1: +46 F, fair. We hauled out manure in the forenoon; in the afternoon painted in grain barn until 3 o'clock, then harrowed with wheel and spring tooth harrows the rest of the afternoon.

Fri., June 2: +51 F, fair. Harrowed with wheel harrow in upper end of Big Field nearly all forenoon; in the afternoon we planted corn until 4 o'clock, then I harrowed until chore time.

Sat., June 3: +48 F, fair. Hauled out manure in the forenoon; in the afternoon hauled in stove wood.

Sun., June 4: +53 F, fair. Went to church today.

Mon., June 5: +52 F, fair. Hauled out manure in the forenoon; in the afternoon wheeled in furnace wood.

Tue., June 6: +56 F, fair. Hauled out manure in the forenoon; in the afternoon wheeled in stove wood.

Wed., June 7: +57 F, fair. Hauled off stones awhile in the forenoon, then I wheeled in stove wood the rest of the day.

Thurs., June 8: +53, rainy. Fixed fence and worked on stove wood in the forenoon; also picked over beans. In the afternoon we hauled out manure with the spreader.

Fri., June 9: +45 F, rainy. Did odd jobs around the house as it rained too hard to work out-doors.

Sat., June 10: +40 F, rainy. Put wood into sap camp and wheeled in rest of furnace wood; also wheeled in some stove wood. Fixed wagon rill [?].

Sun., June 11: +48 F, rainy. Did not go to church today.

Mon., June 12: +48 F, cloudy. Mowed back yard and cleaned up buggy wheels in forenoon; in the afternoon worked wheeling in stove wood. Finished the woodpile.

Tue., June 13: +55 F, fair. Worked on the road in the forenoon; in the afternoon we hauled ashes and spread them in the lower corner of the Big Field.

Wed., June 14: +55 F, cloudy. Worked on the roller in the forenoon; in the afternoon we hauled off rocks.

Thurs., June 15: +53 F, cloudy. Painted on what was left of old lumber shed in forenoon; in the afternoon we hauled out manure.

Fri., June 16: +44 F, cloudy. Finished hauling out manure in the forenoon; in the afternoon we hauled off stones for an hour or so, then I spread manure and lugged off brush.

Sat., June 17: +49 F, rainy. Worked on a butterfly net in the forenoon; in the afternoon went to the village.

Sun., June 18: +53 F, cloudy. Did not go to church today.

Mon., June 19: 52 f, fair. In forenoon worked hoeing the garden; in the afternoon went down to the village to vote.

Tue., June 20: +52 F, fair. Worked hoeing out front of the house in the forenoon; in the afternoon we planted our last piece of corn in the upper end of the Big Field.

Wed., June 21: +52 F, fair. Worked hoeing all day out front of the house.

Thurs., June 22: +50 F, fair. Hoed all day. There was a very strong wind in the afternoon.

Fri., June 23: +52 F, fair. In afternoon hoed up in Big Field.

Sat., June 24: +61 F, fair. Worked all forenoon harrowing in lower corner of Big Field; in afternoon we planted fodder corn and beans where I harrowed.

Sun., June 25: +57 F, rainy. Went to church today.

Mon., June 26: +68 F, fair. Went to Portland to see 101 Ranch Show, which was fairly good.

Tue., June 27: +64 F, showery. Went over to Fair Grounds to picnic. Charles Dudley's buildings burnt by lightning.

Wed., June 28: +64 F. In forenoon rolled some ground in Big Field and hoed in South Field; in afternoon hoed in same field. Automobile was delivered here today.

Thurs., June 29: +68 F, fair. Hoed all day in South Field.

Fri., June 30: +61 F, fair. Hoed until about 3 o'clock when we had a shower. Worked on cart and getting out hay rakes. Mowed some grass. Went to Spark's Circus in the evening.

July

Sat., July 1: +60 F, fair. Worked all day hoeing; finished the potatoes. Went to the moving pictures in the evening.

Sun., July 2: +66 F, fair. Did not go to church today.

Mon., July 3: +58 F, rainy. In the forenoon worked around the buildings, fixed haying tools; in the afternoon worked haying. Went to village in the evening.

Tue., July 4: +53 F, cloudy. Went to village in the forenoon; in the afternoon it rained, so I stayed in the house.

Wed., July 5: +52 F, cloudy. In the forenoon I stowed away lumber from the building we tore down [this may have been the old Sheep Barn]; in the afternoon hoed in lower end of the big field.

Thurs., July 6: +55 F, fair. Hoed nearly all day in big field, mostly at the upper end; the last part of this afternoon we raked hay.

Fri., July 7: +61 F, fair. Hoed all the forenoon except a little time opening hay; in the afternoon hoed for awhile and then got in two loads of hay, then raked up part of the hay mowed today.

Sat., July 8: +63 F, fair. Hoed in the forenoon, except a little time opening hay; in the afternoon we got in three loads of hay.

Sun., July 9: +62 F, fair. Did not go to church today.

Mon., July 10: +63 F, fair. In the forenoon did the trimming out and some hoeing. In the afternoon raked up the scatterings and did some hoeing and trimming out.

Tue., July 11: +62 F, foggy. Went to village in the forenoon with covered buggy, and we mowed some. In the afternoon a thunder shower prevented us from doing anything, but a few odd jobs such as grinding scythes, etc.

Wed., July 12: +81 F, fair. Worked hoeing corn in the forenoon; in the afternoon we worked haying.

Thurs., July 13: +84 F, fair. Worked on hay nearly all day, though I hoed for an hour along towards night.

Fri., July 14: +57 F, fair. Hoed nearly all the forenoon; in the afternoon we got in three loads of hay. Went to Fair Grounds in evening, to Chautauqua entertainment in evening, and heard a Psychic lecture.

Sat., July 15: +57 F, fair. Worked hoeing until eleven o'clock; then I raked up the scatterings left the day before. Went to Chautauqua entertainment and heard about Shakespeare and his plays in the evening.

Sun., July 16: +62 F, fair. Did not go to church today. Went to hear Florentine Band at Fair Grounds in the afternoon.

Mon., July 17: +69 F, fair. Worked mowing in the forenoon; in the afternoon went to Fair Grounds to hear Chautauqua lecture.

Tue., July 18: +68 F, foggy. Worked trimming out all the forenoon; in the afternoon we did raking and got in three loads of hay.

Wed., July 19: +81 F, cloudy. Worked all day haying. We got in six loads. Mrs. Cummings raked for us.

Thurs., July 20: +81 F, fair. Worked all day haying; we got in four big loads.

Fri., July 21: +68 F, rainy. In the forenoon we stowed hay and ground machine scythes; in the afternoon stayed in the house as it rained hard.

Sat., July 22: +68 F, cloudy. Worked cultivating the most of the forenoon, then opened the hay; in the afternoon I hoed until it began to rain about 3 o'clock. Went down to village in the evening on my bicycle.

Sun., July 23: +68 F, cloudy. Did not go to church today.

Mon., July 24: +67 F, foggy. Worked in the garden in the forenoon; in the afternoon we mowed the field by side of Town Farm road and got in a load of hay.

Tue., July 25: +80 F, cloudy. We worked all day haying. In the forenoon I worked trimming out; in the afternoon I raked some hay and we got in one load of hay that was badly hurt.

Wed., July 26: +68 F, fair. Worked all day haying and got in four loads.

Thurs., July 27: +68 F, fair. Worked haying all day and got in three loads and a small load.

Fri., July 28: +60 F, fair. Worked all day haying. Freeland Cummings helped us in the afternoon, and we got in five big loads.

Sat., July 29: +68 F, fair. We worked all day haying and got in three big loads.

Sun., July 30: +63 F, fair. Went to church today.

Mon., July 31: +67 F, rainy. As it rained in the morning, we did but little haying in the forenoon. I ground a mowing machine scythe and trimmed out a little. In the afternoon we mowed and got in a load of hay.

August

Tue., Aug. 1: +62 F, fair. Worked all day haying and got in four good loads.

Wed., Aug. 2: +53 F, fair. Worked all day haying and got in two and one half loads. (written Thursday).

Thurs., Aug. 3: +62 F, fair. Worked all day haying and got in three and one-half loads (written Friday).

Fri., Aug. 4: [no entry]

Sat., Aug. 5: +62 F, cloudy. We did no haying today, except got in one load of hay. I went to the village in the forenoon and got Prince [one of the work horses] shod. We did some trap shooting after dinner.

Sun., Aug. 6: +66 F, fair. Went down to Empire Camp meeting grounds today and came home by Poland Springs and East Oxford.

Mon., Aug. 7: +62 F, cloudy. In the forenoon we mowed in field next to Cummings; in the afternoon we mowed in Young Orchard and raked what we mowed in the forenoon. In evening went to Norway to Political meeting.

Tue., Aug. 8: +73 F, rainy. Worked haying in the forenoon and got in one load of hay; in the afternoon we stayed in the house as it rained hard.

Wed., Aug. 9: +53 F, rainy. In the forenoon we worked on roads a little and stayed in the house; in the afternoon I went to the village to hear Pres. Clay speak at the Grange Hall.

Thurs., Aug. 10: +54 F, cloudy. We went over to Shaw's to pick blueberries and got 42 quarts. In the evening we went to the village.

Fri., Aug. 11: +51 F, fair. We worked haying all day and got in three loads. Went to village in automobile in the evening.

Sat., Aug. 12: +56 F, cloudy. Worked all day haying and got in four loads.

Sun., Aug. 13: +54 F, fair. Stayed at home today.

Mon., Aug. 14: +46 F, fair. Worked haying all day; we mowed by hand all side of the Town Farm road and got in one load from 12 acre field; we mowed some down between the hills.

Tue., Aug. 15: fair. We worked haying all day; we finished the hand mowing beside of the road towards the village in the forenoon and got in two loads of hay in the afternoon.

Wed., Aug. 16: +55 F, fair. I went to village in the forenoon; in the afternoon I hauled off rocks and mowed bushes.

Thurs., Aug. 17: +59 F, fair. Went blueberrying over to Shaw's in the forenoon; in the afternoon went to Case Farm to hear some orchard demonstration work under the charge of Mr. Yeaton.

Fri., Aug. 18: +61 F, fair. Mowed the most of the 7 acre field, also a piece of oats; we raked it up and got in one load. Went to village to see movies in the evening.

Sat., Aug. 19: +64 F, fair. We mowed the rest of 7 acre field and another piece of oats; in the afternoon we got in two loads of oats and one load of hay.

Sun., Aug. 20: +68 F, fair. Went to an automobile ride around Thompson Pond and over around Norway Lake.

Mon., Aug. 21: +64 F, fair. In the forenoon we mowed some straw and fixed the grain barn so we could get in the grain; at 11 o'clock I raked up the oats; in the afternoon we got in two loads of oats and then we mowed piece in Big Field.

Tue., Aug. 22: +68 F, fair. Worked killing [weeds] until after nine o'clock when I went to Dr. Swic's auction and stayed until two o'clock; worked rest of afternoon on weeds.

Wed., Aug. 23: +61 F, fair. Worked killing weeds up in Big Field in the forenoon; in the afternoon we got in one load of oats and part of another when thunder showers stopped us; much damage by lightning.

Thurs., Aug. 24: +59 F, cloudy. Picked sweet apples in the forenoon; in the afternoon mowed brakes beside the Town Farm road.

Fri., Aug. 25: +54 F, fair. Worked till half past nine mowing brakes beside the Town Farm road; then opened oats and turned them. We got in two loads, leaving out one load.

Sat., Aug. 26: +52 F, fair. We opened the oats and worked killing weeds in the forenoon; in the afternoon we got in a load of oats and raked up the scatterings, after which I killed weeds in the corn.

Sun., Aug. 27: +62 F, fair. Stayed at home today. We had a heavy shower about 7 o'clock in the evening.

Mon., Aug. 28: +51 F, rainy. Worked on Aqueduct Hill until half past two o'clock when it began to rain. Cleaned out pig pen and hen house the last part of afternoon.

Tue., Aug. 29: +42 F, fair. Worked all day killing weeds in Big Field and South Field.

Wed., Aug. 30: +44 F, fair. Loaded a load of straw and killed weeds in forenoon; in afternoon we mowed millet and killed weeds in the corn. Had a shower in the evening.

Thurs., Aug. 31: +48 F, fair. Worked all day hauling off rocks from Big Field. In evening went to Lewiston in automobile to hear Col. Roosevelt.

September

Fri., Sept. 1: +51 F, fair. Loaded a load of straw in forenoon; in afternoon killed weeds and picked apples, also raked up some clover hay. Went to the village in the evening.

Sat., Sept. 2: +64 F, fair. Ploughed most of the day in upper corner of big field. Cocked up some hay towards night.

Sun., Sept. 3: +40 F, fair. Did not go to church today.

Mon., Sept. 4: +38 F, cloudy. Went to the village in the forenoon; in the afternoon had a clay pigeon shoot. In the evening went to hear Raymond Robbins speak at Grange hall.

Tue., Sept. 5: +48 F, cloudy. Cut bushes in the forenoon; in the afternoon we built over the culvert near Lee Dudley's.

Wed., Sept. 6: +48 F, cloudy. Cut bushes in the forenoon; in the afternoon pulled beans and cut some bushes the last part of the afternoon.

Thurs., Sept. 7: +52 F, cloudy. Cut bushes in the forenoon; in the afternoon went to the village.

Fri., Sept. 8: +66 F, cloudy. Went to Lewiston and got home about half past three o'clock. Cut bushes the remainder of the afternoon.

Sat., Sept. 9: +50 F, fair. Worked all day on the road from our house to Fore Street, Oxford.

Sun., Sept. 10: fair. Went to automobile ride down by Tripp Pond and over to Poland Springs.

Mon., Sept. 11: +40 F, fair. Opened and turned hay in forenoon; in the afternoon we got in five loads of Hungarian and clover.

Tue., Sept. 12: +48 F, fair. Mowed the swale and got in two loads of hay.

Wed., Sept. 13: +48 F, fair. Went to Oxford Co. Fair all day.

Thurs., Sept. 14: +59 F, fair. Went to Fair today; arrived home at 3 o'clock. Cut bushes the remainder of the afternoon.

Fri., Sept. 15: +61 F, fair. Set up gasoline engine and ensilege cutter and got silo ready to cut in ensilege. It rained in the afternoon.

Sat., Sept. 16: +59 F, fair. Worked cutting corn and filling silo with Western corn.

Sun., Sept. 17: +41 F, fair. Did not go to church today. Went down to Wallace Clifford's in the afternoon.

Mon., Sept. 18: +37 F, fair. Worked cutting corn and filling the silo with feeder corn.

Tue., Sept. 19: +38 F, fair. Picked corn in the forenoon; in the afternoon picked Porter apples.

Wed., Sept. 20: +31 F, fair. Cut corn and hauled it to the silo and cut it in in the forenoon; in the afternoon dug potatoes, hauled in more corn and a load of pumpkins and hauled in potatoes. Frost did some damage.

Thurs., Sept. 21: 43 F, fair. Picked corn in the forenoon; in the afternoon cut Sweet corn.

Fri., Sept. 22: +45 F, fair. In the forenoon hauled in Sweet corn and cut it into silo, also harrowed about three hours; in afternoon cut one load of sweet corn, hauled in several loads, and cut into silo, also got in one load of beans.

Sat., Sept. 23: About 50 F, rainy. Picked a load of Sweet corn in the forenoon; in the afternoon picked a few apples; it rained hard most of the time.

Sun., Sept. 24: +43 F, fair. Went to church; in the afternoon went to an automobile ride up to Trap Corner and down the other side of the river.

Mon., Sept. 25: +40 F, fair. Picked Sweet corn all day.

Tue., Sept. 26: +38 F, fair. Picked corn until three o'clock, then I moved pumpkins and cut corn. Went to celebration at South Paris and Norway in the evening.

Wed., Sept. 27: 45 F, fair. Cut corn awhile in the morning and then we hauled corn and cut in into the silo for the rest of the day.

Thurs., Sept. 28: +50 F, fair. Hauled corn up to the house and cut it into the silo. Also cut some corn in lower end of Big Field and what oats we had left there.

Fri., Sept. 29: +58 F, cloudy. Picked a load of corn in the forenoon, our last load; in the afternoon dug potatoes. In the evening went to K. of P. lodge.

Sat., Sept. 30: 46 F, cloudy. Hauled in corn in the forenoon and cut it into silo; in the afternoon picked up potatoes until half past two, then went hunting and shot a Woodcock and Partridge.

October

Sun., Oct. 1: +26 F, fair. Did not go to church today, but stayed at home all day.

Mon., Oct. 2: +31 F, fair. Cut the last of our corn, which had been struck with frost, and cut it into the silo. In afternoon hauled corn fodder from Big Field. Also hauled in two loads of oats from lower end of Big Field.

Tue., Oct. 3: +42 F, fair. Worked most of the day digging potatoes; we picked up what we had dug along towards night and hauled up one load, leaving a few of the Carmen variety until next day.

Wed., Oct. 4: +44 F, fair. Worked digging potatoes until middle of afternoon, and then picked up and hauled to the house the most of what we had dug.

Thurs., Oct. 5: +41 F, fair. Housed engine and cutter in forenoon, also picked apples awhile; in the afternoon worked thrashing over to Swett's.

Fri., Oct. 6: +48 F, fair. Worked nearly all day thrashing. Picked a few apples in the morning.

Sat., Oct. 7: +36 F, fair. Picked apples all day. Hauled them in the last part of the afternoon.

Sun., Oct. 8: +49 F, fair. Went to church today.

Mon., Oct. 9: +49 F, cloudy. Dug potatoes all the forenoon; in the afternoon it rained so we moved oats, stored wagons, and fixed the cellar for storing apples.

Tue., Oct. 10: +23 F, fair. Dug potatoes all the forenoon; in the afternoon picked up potatoes and also picked a few bushels of apples. It has been very cold for the time of year.

Wed., Oct. 11: +26 F, fair. Picked apples all day. Hauled them in last thing at night.

Thurs., Oct. 12: 23 F, fair. Picked apples all day; began and finished [picking the apples in] the Horse pasture.

Fri., Oct. 13: +42 F, rainy. Picked apples until half past three o'clock, then worked covering barrels the remainder of the afternoon. It began to rain shortly after dinner.

Sat., Oct. 14: +26 F, fair. Picked apples in the forenoon; in the afternoon went to Hebron to see football game. Hunted some on the way over and back. Went in automobile.

Sun., Oct. 15: +31 F, fair. Did not go to church today. In afternoon went to automobile ride down over Pigeon Hill and over Mcquire Hill and back by Mr. Rich's place.

Mon., Oct. 16: +41 F, fair. Picked apples all day. In the evening went down to village in auto to see moving pictures.

Tue., Oct. 17: +49 F, fair. Picked apples all day. In the afternoon we got to picking in the Young Orchard. Very windy and cold.

Wed., Oct. 18: +19 F, fair. Began to pick apples about 9 o'clock and picked the rest of the day. In spite of the cold weather the apples did not seem to be froze.

Thurs., Oct. 19: +23 F, rainy. Picked apples all of the forenoon and part of the afternoon. It began to rain before noon and continued all night.

Fri., Oct. 20: +45 F, fair. Husked sweet corn in the morning. Picked apples the remainder of the day.

Sat., Oct. 21: +55 F, fair. It rained last night and some during the forenoon. Worked picking apples nearly all day; finished the Young Orchard. Went hunting a little while the last part of the afternoon.

Sun., Oct. 22: +31 F, fair. Went to church today.

Mon., Oct. 23: +23 F, fair. Picked apples all day on the Town Farm road.

Tue., Oct. 24: +23 F, fair. Picked apples all day in ox pasture.

Wed., Oct. 25: +26 F, fair. Picked apples until three o'clock. Then we went to station to see Company D come home from Texas.

Thurs., Oct. 26: +45 F, fair. Picked apples all day except that I went hunting about an hour. Practically finished the apples.

Fri., Oct. 27: +25 F, fair. Went to village with the cream in the forenoon; in the afternoon we got in the garden produce. Went to the K. of P. lodge in the evening.

Sat., Oct. 28: 23 F, fair. In forenoon we finished getting in garden stuff and burnt off potato tops; in the afternoon we drilled rocks in the Big Field.

Sun., Oct. 29: 23 F, fair. Did not go to church today, but stayed home and read.

Mon., Oct. 30: 35 F, foggy. Sorted over some cider apples and drilled two rocks in the forenoon; in the afternoon worked on cellar stairs. In the evening went to moving pictures.

Tue., Oct. 31: 41 F, foggy. In forenoon finished the cellar stairs; in the afternoon hauled off rocks up in Big Field.

November

Wed., Nov. 1: 40 F, rainy. In forenoon hauled out manure; in the afternoon coopered barrels.

Thurs., Nov. 2: 29 F, fair. Worked filling up stone holes in afternoon; in the afternoon hauled out manure.

Fri., Nov. 3: 23 F, fair. Coopered barrels until 10 o'clock, then worked digging ditch for drain pipe the remainder of the day in Big Field. Went to lecture on Lincoln at Methodist church in the evening.

Sat., Nov. 4: 20 F, fair. In forenoon hauled out manure; in the afternoon went to village with cream and got 50 ft. of drain pipe.

Sun., Nov. 5: 20 F, fair. Went to church today.

Mon., Nov. 6: +16 F, fair. Coopered barrels all the forenoon; in the afternoon laid 50 ft. of drain pipe in upper end of Big Field.

Tue., Nov. 7: +16 F, fair. Hauled out manure all the forenoon; in the afternoon went to the village to get a load of barrels and to vote. Hunted a little coming home. In the evening went to the village to see moving pictures and to get election returns.

Wed., Nov. 8: +29 F, fair. Worked sorting apples all day.

Thurs., Nov. 9: +37 F, fair. Worked sorting apples all day.

Fri., Nov. 10: +31 F, fair. Worked sorting apples all day in the cellar. Went to lodge in the evening.

Sat., Nov. 11: +35 F, fair. Went to village with a load of apples in the forenoon; brought home a load of barrels. In the afternoon worked coopering barrels.

Sun., Nov. 12: 46 F, fair. Did not go to church today.

Mon., Nov. 13: +21 F, stormy. Went to village with the cream in the forenoon, also opened silo; in afternoon fixed the barn doors, coopered barrels, and sorted apples. First snow storm this fall.

Tue., Nov. 14: +40 F, stormy. Worked sorting apples all day. Storm cleared up at noon, about 10 inches of snow; people are using sleighs.

Wed., Nov. 15: -6 F, fair. Coopered barrels in the forenoon; in the afternoon we picked over apples.

Thurs., Nov. 16: -7 F, fair. Loaded a load of apples in the morning. Picked over apples the remainder of the day.

Fri., Nov. 17: -3 F, stormy. Hauled three loads of apples to village, 42 barrels in all. Went to village in evening to see moving pictures and Democratic celebration.

Sat., Nov. 18: +9 F, fair. Killed a pig in the forenoon; in the afternoon coopered barrels and filled drain ditch in upper corner of Big Field.

Sun., Nov. 19: +16 F, fair. Did not go to church, but went to concert at four o'clock.

Mon., Nov. 20: +30 F, fair. Measured the chimney and made a cover for one in the forenoon; in the afternoon hauled dirt to bank up the house.

Tue., Nov. 21: +10 F, fair. In the forenoon sifted sand and made a cover for one of the chimneys. In the afternoon cleaned out the hen house and got a load of pine brush. Subscribed for the Mentor at $3.00.

Wed., Nov. 22: +6 F, fair. Helped build over the furnace in forenoon, also went to village with the cream; in the afternoon we rebuilt part of the arch to the sap camp.

Thurs., Nov. 23: 25 F, stormy. Worked all day hauling out manure using a cart body on a sled; we put the most of it down in the Young Orchard.

Fri., Nov. 24: +39 F, fair. In forenoon made some moulds to make cement slab to put on top of the chimneys.

Sat., Nov. 25: +10 F, fair. Worked nearly all day hauling out manure. Finished for this fall.

Sun., Nov. 26: -3 F, fair. Went to church today.

Mon., Nov. 27: 0 F, fair. Cleaned out the hog pen, also sawed up some wood and covered the silo. Fixed the barn doors with meadow hay. Sawed wood in the afternoon, mostly old sleepers.

Tue., Nov. 28: 30 F, fair. Went to village in the forenoon with a load of wood; in the afternoon hauled some wood down to the sap camp and also into the shed. Went to the movies in the evening.

Wed., Nov. 29: 22 F, rainy. Worked all day sawing wood, mostly old sleepers and boards. Cleaned out hog pen in the morning.

Thurs., Nov. 30: +38 F, rainy. It rained hard all day, so I stayed in the house and repaired my clothes and shoes.

December

Fri., Dec. 1: 35 F, fair. Cut wood beside the Town Farm road in forenoon, also last part of the afternoon; the first part of the afternoon I helped to cut brush around the house.

Sat., Dec. 2: 19 F, fair. Cut wood all day beside the Town Farm road, mostly Gray Birch.

Sun., Dec. 3: 19 F, fair. Did not go to church today.

Mon., Dec. 4: +10 F, stormy. Cut wood in the forenoon; in the afternoon sorted over potatoes. Saw a Pine Grosbeak.

Tue., Dec. 5: 28 F, rainy. Finished sorting potatoes in the forenoon; in the afternoon coopered barrels.

Wed., Dec. 6: 29 F, fair. Packed apples all day. We sold the last lot of about 60 barrels to E. Twitchell.

Thurs., Dec. 7: 28 F, fair. Thrashed beans in the forenoon; in the afternoon we cut old apple trees on the road to Town Farm.

Fri., Dec. 8: 23 F, fair. Packed apples in the forenoon, finishing the lot; in the afternoon I cut wood.

Sat., Dec. 9: 10 F, fair. Cut wood in the forenoon; in the afternoon went to Norway with a load of apples.

Sun., Dec. 10: 20 F, cloudy. Did not go to church today.

Mon., Dec. 11: 20 F, fair. Worked cutting wood all day in the South Field woods.

Tue., Dec. 12: 16 F, stormy. Cleaned up the cellar in the forenoon; in the afternoon mended my clothes and read. Subscribed for The Chauffeur, to begin with Jan. number.

Wed., Dec. 13: 4 F, fair. Worked all day cutting wood in South Field woods.

Thurs., Dec. 14: -1 F, fair. Worked all day cutting wood in the South Field woods.

Fri., Dec. 15: -4 F, stormy. Went to village with the milk in the forenoon; in the afternoon cut wood.

Sat., Dec. 16: +8 F, stormy. Worked around the buildings all day. Set some glass and fixed up around the buildings. The storm is a regular blizzard, and the roads are blocked so mail man did not come in.

Sun., Dec. 17: +2 F, fair. Broke out the roads in the forenoon; in the afternoon stayed in the house. We got our mail of the mail man at the turn.

Mon., Dec. 18: -3 F, fair. Fixed window sill and split wood in the forenoon; in the afternoon went to village to have a tooth treated at the dentists.

Tue., Dec. 19: +4 F, fair. In the forenoon we broke out the roads; in the afternoon we hauled in what stove wood we have out doors and put it in the new building [Machine Shed?].

Wed., Dec. 20: +3 F, fair. Went to the village with milk in the forenoon, and to have tooth treated; in the afternoon we hauled up wood with the team. Dr. Merrill is here to test cows.

Thurs., Dec. 21: +16 F, stormy. Killed two pigs in the forenoon; in the afternoon cut wood in the South Field woods.

Fri., Dec. 22: +23 F, rainy. Worked most of the forenoon in the woods; in the afternoon helped get gasoline engine ready to grind grain.

Sat., Dec. 23: +8 F, fair. Worked nearly all day in the South Field woods; helped load a load of wood after dinner. Wind blew very hard all day from Northwest.

Sun., Dec. 24: + 7 F, fair. Did not go to church today.

Mon., Dec. 25: +2 F, fair. Went to village in forenoon; in afternoon fixed windmill and cut wood.

Tue., Dec. 26: -3 F, fair. Worked all day getting up wood from Young Orchard and South Field woods. A heavy wind blowed from the north all day, making it very uncomfortable.

Wed., Dec. 27: -6 F, fair. In forenoon went to village to have tooth treated; in the afternoon helped start gasoline engine and worked awhile in the woods.

Thurs., Dec. 28: +27 F (noon), fair. Worked all day in the South Field woods; helped load team and cut wood between loads.

Fri., Dec. 29: -8 F, fair. Worked in the South Field woods all the forenoon; in the afternoon went to the village with the milk.

Sat., Dec. 30: -15 F, fair. Worked all day cleaning out the ice house.

Sun., Dec. 31: -13 F, fair. Did not go to church today.

THE END

APPENDIX I

Additional Information About Hudson Knight and Family

[Editor's note: In an article published ca. 1940 in the *Oxford Democrat,* just after the old Hudson Knight place burned, Anna I. Parsons (Aunt Annie), who had known the Knights much better than Dad, described the Knight family and their home farm as follows:]

"The old Hudson Knight place, destroyed by fire on May 1st, was probably as interesting a place as the town of Paris has within its territory. Hudson's father was Nathaniel Knight, who married Martha Houghton, and had three children, to wit: Hudson Knight, born July 31, 1834; Livonia Knight, born December 11, 1835; Horace Knight, born May 11, 1838.

"They all remained on the home farm with their parents in District No. 1, and were brought up under their mother's rigid ideas of dress, which was that of the early 19th century.

"Hudson was a light hearted boy who loved to whistle. One day his mother told him she would give him fifty cents if he would not whistle for a week (hoping to cure him of the habit). He kept his word not to whistle, but when, at the end of the week, his mother gave him the fifty cents, he took it gratefully and went away whistling.

"He was a soldier in the Civil War and had many interesting stories to tell of his experiences. The best meal he had while in the army, he said, was one day when

he and another soldier were detailed to unload some molasses. On completing the work, they filled their army canteens with the syrup and went off by themselves and had a square meal of hardtack and molasses.

"He was fond of horses, and, at the time of his enlistment in the army, he had a pet colt that he very much regretted leaving behind him. On his return from the war, however, as he stepped into the barn, while talking to his father and brother, the colt recognized his voice and whinnied for him.

"His courtship of Ellen Woodbury, daughter of the old sea captain who lived in a cabin in the pines on the East Oxford Road, but who at this particular time was living at a place that had been the Joel Robinson farm, was frequently referred to in our neighborhood. He had gone to spend the evening with Ellen, and his mother, becoming worried over his long absence, sent her youngest son, Horace, to seek him. Horace entered the Woodbury home, found the room in which the two were sitting, and abruptly announced: 'Hud, marm wants you to come home.' With considerable sentiment, Hudson countered, 'I'll come when I get ready!' Whereupon Horace, without being asked, sat himself down and exclaimed, 'By gorri, I shan't go 'til you do!' That ended Hudson's dalliance with Ellen. Afterward her parents separated and Ellen moved from the neighborhood. I often saw Hudson passing our house, wearing his heavy overcoat of cadet blue, and knew he was on his way to visit the farm he had bought just beyond that of Ellen's father's place. He always appeared cheerful and happy, and the wrecking of his romance, as far as I could infer, never affected his disposition.

"But I was going to describe the Knight buildings as I saw them as a little girl [in the 1870s]: Two one and a half story houses had been pushed together, so that one overlapped the other some eight feet and a door was cut through so that there was access from one house to the other. There was an outside entrance to each house. Then, as you traveled westward from the main house, you passed the pump house and near that was a corn-crib, a small, round building that stood on a pedestal some three or four feet from the ground, and a woodshed on the opposite side of the path. The cattle barn was a little farther west from these. Perhaps there were two barns near together. I remember being taken into a place one day where there was fruit and being given some very good Winesap apples. I was also taken into the cattle barn once by Horace, whose hobby was raising fat oxen, and he showed me a pair of oxen that looked as if they might burst their skins from overeating. I have forgotten what their girth was, but I do remember that Horace took it with a small sized chain that he threw around one of them just back of the animal's front legs.

"Another building that stood out rather prominently was a small one, some two hundred feet east of the house, and I was told it was for the purpose of making shoes for the family. In going about with my parents, I often saw similar small houses near farm buildings. Apparently the work of keeping a family shod required a one room house where a bench with lasts, awls, leather, linen thread, was, binding, etc. could be readily found. I never was inside of one of these houses and never saw shoes made at home.

"Back of the protected corner where the two houses were joined, there was a shelter for beehives. Perhaps they had a half dozen hives there in my young day. When the father of the family, Mr. Nathaniel Knight died, I was three and a half years old [in 1873] and recall mother saying that Horace, in keeping with an old superstition, had draped the hives so that the bees would not fly away.

"These are all the buildings I can now recall that were included with the home group. They were all unpainted and perhaps not in very good repair, but on this Knight family called the most distinguished visitors to our town. People returning home from the far west always called at least once at their place.

"Livonia was a most dutiful daughter and always dressed in clothing made as her mother dictated, until after her death. Then I remember she surprised us one day. We had visitors from Norway at the farm – two Millett cousins and a Miss Cummings who was studying elocution in Boston at the time. We were having a real jolly time when Livonia came in. She had on a one-piece, ready-made dress and a white leghorn hat trimmed with a dark band with streamers and a bunch of blue violets at one side. Mrs. Bennett, the milliner at South Paris village, had made it for her and it was really becoming to the face that was old and wizened up before she ever knew the feel of stylish head-gear. She died a few years after that of cancer of the breast. It has always been a mystery to me why one who lived so wholesome a life should die of this painful disease.

"Horace preceded her, dying of softening of the brain.

"Hudson, at last free from all entangling alliances, married his cousin, Ida Houghton, and had four years of happy married life with her. When she died, he bought a house in the village and thereafter married his housekeeper, Lila Andrews. She was a most faithful wife to him.

"I used to call on Hudson every summer when I was home on vacation. The last time I called he was then very old but active, and said to me as he stood at the door at parting, 'Anna, if I am alive when you come next year, some and see me.' He died that winter, aged ninety-three.

"When the widow Knight and her three children were all living at the farm, they took seventeen newspapers and magazines and were always posted on current events throughout the states.

"They were great lovers of flowers and had many kinds planted in the nooks and corners about their rambling dwelling. Whenever I went there in the summer season, I came away with my hands filled with rosemary, southernwood, chamomile and a great variety of blossoms.

"These dear neighbors have all gone to their eternal home; there are no descendants to represent them, and now the old farm buildings that seemed so much a part of them are no more. I find my eyes filling with tears as I close this article, for something has gone from old District No. 1 that can never be restored."

Anna I. Parsons

APPENDIX 2

Obituary for Oscar W. Parsons

Norway Advertiser Sept. 22, 1922

Oscar W. Parsons, aged 43, a prosperous farmer, living about two miles from South Paris on the East Oxford road, ended his life by shooting, Wednesday afternoon, Sept. 13.

Mr. Parsons had been suffering from a carbuncle on his face and was in a serious condition. It was the intention to take him to a hospital in Lewiston Wednesday to have it removed. The pain gradually affected his mind and depressed him. At noon he urged the several members of his family and the nurse to go to dinner and leave him alone. In a few minutes they heard a shot and rushing back into the room, found he had placed a revolver to his head and fired. He lived but a short time.

Mr. Parsons was the son of Stephen Robinson and Margaret [sic; actually Mary] (Thomas) Parsons, and was born on the farm he occupied January 18, 1879.

He was highly respected. He leaves a wife and three sons, Merton, Gordon [sic; actually Shirley], and Philip, and the daughter Bernice. He also leaves a brother, John Parsons, who resides in South Paris, and four sisters, Mrs. Apphia Clifford and Mrs. Dora Muzzy, also of South Paris, Mrs. Mary McKnight who lives in the West, and Anna I. Parsons of New York City.

The funeral service was at his late home Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock, Rev. A.T. McWhorter of Augusta officiating. Burial at Fairview Cemetery.

[Editor's note: A virtually identical obituary appeared in the *Oxford Democrat* two days earlier.]

ENDNOTES

1. During the last several decades of her life, my mother, Elisabeth Oldenburg Parsons, wrote a series of comparable essays about her childhood and youth on her family's farm in upstate New York. These essays, which detail women's domestic work on another northern, horse-powered farm, nicely complement Dad's writings on men's work. I am presently editing my mother's essays for publication in the near future, and they should eventually provide a nice companion piece to this volume.

2. In an article entitled "Household and Community on the Middle Border," in the journal *Landscape*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 3-7. Reprinted in 1966 in *Land and Life: A Selection from the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, pp. 32-41.

3. He was probably "Spitter" Witham, a local character about town in later years. Aunt Bun tells the story of how he used to embarrass her on occasion by loud greetings in public places (such as the square in downtown South Paris).

4. Dad once told me that when his father was a boy on the farm, they had used a small brass cannon as a Fourth of July noisemaker. Legend has it that young Oscar once fired the cannon through one of the front windows, and its use was discontinued after that. Dad never did know whatever became of the cannon; it was not around during his time, and has not turned up since.

5. John Parsons, 1765-1847, Dad's great-great Grandfather and one of the founding fathers of Norway village.

6. Dad also told me once that ca. 1917, at the time of the Russian Revolution, his father told him (Dad) that "one American could lick 10 Russians."

7. I think Dad always believed the Old Squire stories were true, or at least closely based on C. A. Stephen's true-life experiences. I became aware, many years ago, that these were fictional stories, and I once indirectly hinted at this to Dad sometime in the 1970s. I don't recall if we ever thoroughly hashed it out, but I have a vague memory that my suggestion came as a bit of a mild shock to Dad, perhaps more than he was prepared to accept at that time.

8. Hannibal Hamlin, who lived on Paris Hill, is probably best remembered as U.S. Vice President during the first Lincoln administration, 1861-1865.

9. Aunt Bun once told me that Mrs. Stephens occasionally would sing in church, although rarely. When that did happen, her voice was still so strong and beautiful that most of the rest of the congregation would stop singing and just listen to her. This may have been the main reason why she sang so little—it just overwhelmed everybody else.

10. The sap camp was still standing in my earliest memory, probably up until about 1950 or even 1955. After that it collapsed, and existed only as a big pile of collapsed boards and bricks, and I recall seeing several rusted metal buckets there too. These materials gradually decayed, and after the mid-1970s only a few bricks remain to mark the spot. This sap camp was actually a "new" one, constructed about 1905. In the early 1970s, Dad showed me the site of the "original" sap camp, a hundred yards or so closer to the house, at a spot now marked only by a pile of crumbling bricks.

11. Electricity was not installed at the farm until 1971. I remember that its absence seemed quite exotic to us kids during our summer visits to the farm beginning in 1946.

12. Now called the "Old Kitchen."

13. Still in use in the present bathroom.

14. Aunt Bun always insisted that Winter bathing was done more frequently.

15. See Appendix 1.

16. See Appendix 1.

17. A fictitious name.

18. Aunt Bun told me once that another character in these stories was the "Side-Hill Badger," a character with one leg shorter than the other owing to continually running around the side of a hill.

19. I regret to say that, while cleaning out the attic in 1968 or 1971, I discovered it and threw it out, not realizing its historic significance.

20. I now have it in Ann Arbor.

21. In the farm archives there is a photograph of John and his automotive class at the Detroit institute he attended. Also, the several volumes on automobile engineering in the farm library were probably acquired by John at this time.

22. A well known fiddler and snowshoe maker, who lived in Norway, Maine, and who died in 1930.

23. John D. Parsons, 1847-1923, a first-cousin of Dad's grandfather, Stephen R. Parsons. After his mother (Harriet Robinson Parsons) died out in Missouri in 1849, John D. and his two younger brothers were brought to the farm to be raised by their Aunt Apphia and Uncle John Parsons. He spent his childhood and early youth at the farm, 1850-1866, and visited again for the farm centennial celebration in 1903.

24. Dad's grandmother, Mary T. Parsons, died of influenza in Dec. 1918.

25. Dad once told me that prior to about 1900, ice was harvested from a smaller pond at the western edge of the Horse Pasture on farm property. The remnants of this older ice pond are still clearly visible.

26. In 1989, Uncle Shirl told me that he and Uncle Phil filled the ice house for the last time in the winter of 1929-30. Dad was away at college then, and it was Uncle Phil's last year in high school.

27. Frank Shurtleff, died 1910.

28. One of the draft horses.

29. Several of which can still be seen in the South Field and along the upper west edge of the Big Field.

30. Dad's references to the uses of these buildings in the 1970s are now themselves obsolete.

31. This drug store was originally operated by Frank Shurtleff (1856-1909), Aunt Mary's first husband.

32. Now gone.

33. The original building was torn down about 1980, and replaced by the existing Nursing Home.

34. Torn down about 1980, and now a vacant lot.

35. I recall that Dad would often call my attention to such stone walls during walks we took through the woods around the farm.

36. Dad's great-great grandfather, 1765-1825, our farm-founding ancestor. Dad once referred to him as "a good ancestor."

37. Dad and Aunt Bun have both told me that their father would annually purchase a large box of fine chocolates. This arrived by mail, and was eagerly anticipated.

38. Dad himself, as an adult, had a partial dental plate, and I believe this was installed sometime during his 30s, or even earlier.

39. Dad retained his horse-driving skills long after he left the farm. I remember that on a summer visit to our Uncle Dick and Aunt Lila's home on Lake Cayuga, N.Y., there was an old buggy and elderly driving horse (both still functioning) lodged in the barn behind the house. This was probably in 1946 or 1947. One day Dad hitched up the horse to the buggy, and the whole family piled in for an exciting trip into the small hamlet of Ovid, a few miles away. Even at that time we attracted quite a bit of attention from occasional passing motorists and townspeople, and we kids were delighted with the exotic experience. This was the only time I ever rode in a horse and buggy. Many years later, probably around 1970, both my parents were surprised to learn that I did not know what a whiffle tree was, and even in this essay Dad simply assumes the reader knows what it is.

40. I remember that when I was a kid, Dad would sometimes have a glass filled with milk and bread as a sort of dessert after some suppers. I believe he had discontinued this practice by the time I was in high school. I sometimes wondered why he was the only one of us who ate this; the dish seemed unattractive to me, and I could not understand why it appealed to him. He also liked avocados ("alligator pears"), which none of the rest of us ever ate, but I suspect that avocados were not a taste he acquired back on the farm.

41. Forrest Thomas was Dad's second cousin, born about 1900. According to what Dad and Aunt Bun have told me, Forrest had disappeared from town by the mid-1920s, and was never seen or heard from again in the area, not even by his own father (Will Thomas). Back in the 1970s, Mary and I knew an elderly man from Hebron, Harold Hall, who told us that he and Forrest had been close boyhood friends.

42. Both Dad and Aunt Bun have told me that, prior to her marriage, their mother occasionally worked for Mrs. Lovejoy in her tented restaurant operations. This is apparently where their parents, Oscar and Luella, first met in 1905.

43. The Tobeys were distant cousins who spent several summers at the farm during the mid-1920s. Banks Tobey (1914-1989) retained a life-long interest in the farm, and returned with some members of his own family for numerous short visits through the 1970s. His daughter, Mary Ellen Tobey Mannock, continues to make periodic summer visits.

44. Anne Clifford, Earle's youngest sister.

45. A woodlot in North Norway, from which several neighborhood men cut timber that year.

46. Bernice Parsons.

47. See Appendix 2.